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Miguel Augustin Pro

of the Society of Jesus

ANTONIO DRAGON, S. J.

Miguel Augustin Pro

of the Society of Jesus

Martyr of Christ the King

EXECUTED IN MEXICO
NOVEMBER 23, 1927

EDITED IN ENGLISH BY
LAWRENCE DRUMMOND, LL. L.

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Conforming with the decree of Pope Urban VIII, the author, when applying to Father Pro the words holy, saint, martyr, miracles, *etc., has no intention of anticipating the decisions of the Holy See.*

64925

To the Sovereign Pontiff PIUS XI

The Holy Father has promised to canonize our young martyrs...

Such a fatherly interest on the part of the Roman Pontiff made a deep impression on our people.

(Letter of Father Pro,
February 19, 1927.)

SEGRETERIA DI STATO
DI SUA SANTITA

Dal Vaticano, December 19, 1928.

REVEREND FATHER,

His Holiness graciously received the biography, which you presented to him, of Father Miguel Augustin Pro, of your Society, executed in Mexico, on November 23, 1927, in hatred of his zeal for the Divine King Jesus.

The Holy Father cordially thanks you for this proof of filial veneration which is at the same time a tribute to the memory of the hero of Christ the King. As a pledge of particular benevolence, he imparts to you wholeheartedly a special Apostolic Blessing.

Believe me, Reverend Father,

Yours devotedly,

P. CARDINAL GASPARRI.

Rev. Ant. Dragon, S. J.

ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE
ST. BONIFACE. MAN.

September 4, 1928.

REVEREND FATHER,

Your book comes out just as I am sending a circular to the priests in my diocese on the persecution in Mexico.

"The Church in Mexico," I said, "is suffering a bloody persecution. Such atrocities have been committed that His Holiness Pope Pius XI wrote: 'The Catholics in Mexico are suffering the worst persecutions ever known in history. The foreign clergy was banished from the land of Mexico under pain of death; native priests cannot exercise their ministry, several have been shot in hatred of the faith. Adding cowardice to cruelty the Mexican Government slandered its victims before executing them. Religious communities are proscribed, their property is confiscated, churches, seminaries, schools and hospitals are closed."

No time could have been more opportune to present your book to Catholics whom I ask to pray for our persecuted brethren.

The Church is the great family of God and we have no right to be indifferent to what fifteen million Catholics are now suffering. The persecutors are seeking

to root out their love for their Elder Brother Jesus Christ.

We must try to realize the heroic lives they are leading and the awful sufferings they are enduring.

You have served the cause of the Church by setting before us the history of Father Miguel Augustin Pro. As you knew the great apostle of Christ the King personally and met several witnesses of his life and death, you produced a lifelike picture of him.

Father Pro's life is described in its Mexican setting and the reader perusing it will have a good idea of the religious persecution in Mexico. Contact with Father Pro will make him feel stronger and prouder of belonging to the great family of Christ which still begets saints.

Father Pro spent his heroic life fortifying souls and spurring them on to love Christ the King. May your book carry on his work!

† ARTHUR,
Archbishop of St. Boniface (Canada.)

INTRODUCTION

OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF MEXICO

THE history of Mexico falls into three chapters.

The first is little known.

Old Mexico impresses the traveller by the remnants of a rather advanced material civilization and its huge stone buildings like the monuments of the Pharaohs. As early as the XIVth century, the powerful Aztec nation brought four or five tribes under its sway and proceeded to build the city of Mexico. A century later the whole country was covered with roads, pyramids, palaces and temples.

But this industrious nation offered human sacrifices to its uncouth divinities. Old traditions tell of twenty thousand victimes slaughtered at the inauguration of the great temple of Teocalli.

*
* *

Fernando Cortez opened the second chapter of the history of Mexico by giving that vast country to Spain in 1521.

With five hundred men he ruthlessly conquered the natives and kept them under an iron rule. The yoke of "His Catholic Majesty" would have borne heavily on the vanquished had not the Church stood between them and the conquerors and set herself to uplift the the Indians from their degradation.

Great as were the faults of the Spaniards, their colonization system has, however, proved most effective.

The same problem faced the three great nations who settled in the New World.

The French, on landing at Quebec, found some twenty thousand Indians. They sought to make Frenchmen of them, and failed.

The English, on setting foot on the coast of New England, fell in with Indian tribes.

They determined to get rid of them, and succeeded.

But the Spaniards managed to preserve the Mexican Indians by christianizing them. The civil government, while systematically treating them as inferiors and suffering the great landowners (*encomenderos*) to oppress them, welded them into a new race.

"There is no denying", says Raoul Bigot (*Le Mexique Moderne*, p. 10), "that Spain, through unity of authority and language, succeeded in gathering the various races of that country into one nation, thus creating Mexico."

Mexico now has a population of fifteen millions, including a small minority of white people and five million pure-blooded Indians.

The vast majority are of mixed blood. Catholicism is the only religion known to the Mexicans.

It is only natural that the enemies of the Church should war against her priests and oppose her age-old influence. They may ac-

cuse the Church of having betrayed her mission: hundreds of looted churches and thousands of convents and schools closed down are a standing rebuttal.

The proportion of illiterates has grown alarmingly in Mexico within the last hundred years, that is, since the work of the Church has been paralysed by the leaders of the Republic.

"At the beginning of the XIXth century, there were proportionately more schools and students in Mexico than in Great Britain." (*The Month*, October 1926.)

In the century before Harvard came into existence, the University of Mexico was giving courses in medicine, philosophy, law and natural sciences.

In 1544, the Franciscan Zumarraga, first Bishop of Mexico, set up the first printing press in the New World. He published classical books and catechisms: "Because," said he, "there are so many people who know how to read!"

The religious Orders sent missionaries throughout the country and the scattered tribes were brought together and christianized. Industries and arts flourished; native poets and painters vied with those of the Mother Country. This would have been a Golden Age, but for the iron hand of the wealthy Spanish masters. The people began to chafe under their rule.

In 1767, the expulsion of the Jesuits weakened the influence of the Church and revolutionary ideas from France penetrated far and wide. This state of unrest induced the Creoles to shake off the Spanish yoke.

It was not a question of rebelling against the Church which was blameless in the matter, as evidenced by the fact that the first Mexican revolutionist was a priest.

In 1810, Hidalgo y Costilla, Rector of Dolores, indignant at seeing his Creoles persistently debarred from public office, put himself at their head. Taking as his standard the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with

the support of friendly Indians, he soon commanded an army of 80,000 men. He was defeated, captured by the Spaniards and executed.

His follower, Morelos, also a priest, raised the revolutionary standard and met with the same fate in 1815.

The struggle continued and in 1820 the southern Indians revolted. General Iturbide was ordered to subdue them, but he threw in his lot with them and declared himself independent of Spain.

Iturbide succeeded in pacifying all parties, but political dissensions soon broke out again and he had to abdicate. With him fell the short-lived empire which he had founded.

The following year, 1824, saw the proclamation of the Republic. The latter ushered in an era of sanguinary revolutions which is still in progress.

Amid the political turmoil of the last century, the Church sought to combine the best elements. But after the declaration

A DESECRATED CHURCH

of independence many Spanish Bishops and priests had to leave the country. Masonry, imported from the United States by Joel Ponsett, first American consul, spread everywhere, gaining partisans among the leaders. "The Church," they asserted, "is the State's most formidable foe; her influence must be destroyed!"

Meanwhile the parties were wearing themselves down by internecine strife. In 1848, Mexico fell into such a state of anarchy that she was compelled to cede nearly half her territory to the United States. But this did not bring the leaders to their senses. In 1857, the radical element prevailed and sought to revive the drastic legislation of the French Republic against the clergy and Catholic institutions.

The first president whose name will go down to history was Benito Juarez, a poor Indian educated by a village priest. Like his predecessors, he fought his way to power and was conspicuous for his hostility to the

Church. By his infamous "Reform Laws," he suppressed the Catholic Religion, confiscated monastic property and introduced civil marriage.

His zeal might have been more usefully displayed in improving the financial condition of his country. Mexico had become too poor to pay her foreign debts. In 1863, Archduke Maximilian of Austria was sent by Napoleon III to compel the Mexican Government to meet its obligations. Supported by a French army, Maximilian defeated Juarez and founded an empire which, however, collapsed when France withdrew her forces. In 1867, Juarez was again elected president and renewed his onslaughts against the Church.

His successor, Lerdo de Tejàda, enforced the "Reform Laws," struck the name of God off the statutes, abolished holydays and forbade the clergy to teach or to wear a religious garb. Monasteries were turned into barracks or asylums. The religious who had flocked back during Maximilian's short

reign were again banished, the Sisters of Charity not excepted.

Mexico has always been the prize of the strong. Porfirio Dias seized it in 1877 and held it till 1911. At 24, he threw himself into the struggle, at 31 he was a general. In 1862, at the time of the unfortunate French intervention, he displayed extraordinary courage and skill. Often captured by Maximilian's troops, he invariably managed to escape. In 1867, he stormed Puebla and Mexico. The emperor was taken prisoner in Queretaro and executed.

Mexican Catholics look back with gratitude to the benevolent "tyrant." Like another Mussolini, Porfirio Diaz reorganized the country, removing undesirables, securing competent men and effecting useful reforms. The Church could breathe again. The iniquitous laws of Juarez, while unrepealed, were leniently applied. The religious returned despite the law. Catholic schools were opened to offset State schools. Seminaries, hospitals

and colleges sprang up under vigorous clerical management.

Meanwhile the Radicals were on the alert. They chose officials of their own ilk, debarring Catholics who perhaps submitted too tamely to being kept out of office.

Present day Mexico is the outcome of these two influences which developed side by side. Atheistic schools turned out unscrupulous men who kill through hatred or ignorance. Catholic schools produced a generation of heroes ready to die for the faith.

For Christ the King

Happy Years

MIGUEL AUGUSTIN PRO was twenty when this peaceful period closed. Before relating his checkered life for seventeen years, let us dwell on the happy years of his childhood.

Mexico, with a territory three times that of France, is one of the finest countries in the world. It has every climate; deep blue skies shed variegated tints over the plains; snow-capped mountains impart freshness to fields and men. Throughout the year every fruit and flower grows in some corner of the country.

But young Miguel did not come under the influence of this rich and sometimes enervating climate. He spent the first twenty years of his life in two mining centres where his father carried on a successful business.

THE THREE BROTHERS

HUMBERTO MIGUEL ROBERTO

Photo taken on March 19, 1927

At an altitude of ten thousand feet rises the mining town of Concepcion del Oro in the State of Zacatecas, the very centre of Mexico, northwest of the capital. There the future martyr was born on the 13th of January, 1891, and was christened Miguel Augustin.

He had three sisters and three brothers. The eldest sister was a year older than Miguel; another was a year younger. Both became nuns. Ana Maria was born in 1897. She is now taking care of her father, an exile in Cuba. Then followed three brothers: Edmundo, who married in 1922; Humberto, who was shot with Miguel at the age of twenty-four, and Roberto (twenty-three) imprisoned with his brothers and then banished by Calles.

Needless to say the parents were staunch Christians. Their fortitude stood out on many occasions. When Miguel's body, riddled with bullets, was delivered to his father, the latter tearlessly kissed his son's forehead. The pride

of giving him to Christ overbore his sorrow. He was ready to face the sacrifice which he had prepared, so to say, by the example of his own self-denying life. In 1914, when Carranza's revolutionary forces overran the country, he was despoiled of his property, persecuted and compelled to flee for his life.

Young Miguel grew up in an atmosphere of courage. His mother, Josefa Juarez, revealed herself a valiant woman when persecution drove her from her home where she was living in comfort. Ailing and helpless she had to make her way to Guadalajara to find safety. She accepted poverty without a murmur, working to support her family.

Adversity does not beget courage but reveals it. Such fortitude bespoke unwavering virtue in early years.

Miguel Augustin was still young when his father left Concepcion del Oro to take up business at Saltillo, capital of the more northerly State of Coahuila.

CONCEPCION DEL ORO, IN THE STATE OF ZACATECAS, MEXICO, WHERE MIGUEL WAS BORN

He did not begin by being remarkably pious. He was simply a good boy somewhat fond of tricks. In spite of his ability to learn, the mines attracted him more than the schoolroom. Nor was he without his weak points—as children will be glad to know—but his father and mother were there to keep him straight. He was not ashamed to relate that they did not spare the rod when he was young. One day when penniless he wanted to buy candy. The shopkeeper hesitated:

"Don't be afraid," said the child, "I will pay you later on."

Miguel went on buying candy on credit till the bill mounted and was sent to his mother. The latter paid without protest, but Miguel long remembered the night when he went to bed 'a sadder and a wiser man.'

At *Manuel Acuna* School, he was known to be full of life. Ever cheerful and witty, he soon became what he always remained—a charming companion. Ready to fight the

most sturdy, sometimes he had the upper hand, sometimes he went down, like when he sallied forth one fine day with a brand new derby, and came home with a torn and battered hat.

He did not complete his schooling. His father, who owned and operated mines, welcomed an assistant in his eldest son. Miguel, with his remarkable business ability, took over the office work. An expert typist, he could strike off a hundred words a minute.

Whenever he was free he would go down into the pit and chat with the miners whose slang he soon caught. One of his first retreats, after ordination, was preached to miners. He had no trouble in adopting their ways to make them feel at home. Thanks to his former intercourse with them, he found himself, to his surprise, talking their own language.

"I thought I had forgotten it," he said. "Although I had not been with miners for sixteen years, it seemed as if I had learnt their lingo but yesterday."

Amid the rush of business, young Miguel gave little or no time to piety. The religious life was far from his thoughts. His evenings were spent in social gatherings, in the pleasant company of his two sisters whom he loved tenderly. Providence was thus quietly preparing the apostle's vocation, for, without disclosing their secret, they both intended to be nuns.

One fine morning they left home. Miguel was nineteen. Stunned by the blow that broke up their happy life, he stormed, especially against the Jesuits on hearing that the letter were his sisters' spiritual advisers. He swore that he would never forgive them.... One should never say: "No truce between us."

Meanwhile he was beside himself with rage. He sulked and, out of spite, betook himself to the woods, there to live alone.

He remained hidden for some time, but his mother located him and induced him to return. She even prevailed upon him to make a retreat.

There the Lord called him—suddenly, as he had called the apostle Matthew. His life, which he intended devoting to workmen, would be entirely spent for souls, especially for the souls of workmen.

God wished him to be a priest and even a Jesuit. The young man was ready. At twenty he severed his two bonds: his family and his work among the miners.

On August 10, 1911, he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at El Llano, in the State of Michoacan. Some particulars on his life as a novice are supplied by a friend who joined the novitiate the same year.

When Miguel's old friends mention his name, they smile and tell some good joke of his. The impression he left was that he had the gift of radiating happiness. Keen witted, he always saw the funny side of things, cheering all, offending none.

In the novitiate, he was himself from the start. He soon became popular, in the best sense of the word, for every one felt at ease with him.

The novicemaster at once detected his sterling qualities and resolved to develop them without overtaxing them. He was the first to laugh at Miguel's tricks, but lost no opportunity of testing his metal.

Two months after his entrance, the novices were playing base ball during a holiday. While awaiting his turn at the bat, Miguel, unable to stand idle, proceeded to climb up the wire netting behind the catcher. There he bethought himself of addressing his brethren. They laughed encouragingly, so he went on. His witty speech proved so entertaining that the game stopped and all the novices grouped around him. Just as the peroration ended the novicemaster happened to pass by.

"What's up ?" he inquired.

"Miguel has just been treating us to a sermon," replied one of the "congregation."

"Splendid," said the Father, "Sorry I missed it. Miguel will no doubt favor me with a repetition."

The would-be preacher had to begin all over again.

Miguel was trusted by his superiors who always gave him some office to discharge towards his fellow novices, for he had not only his tricks to recommend him. Recreation once over, he fell into line and kept the minute rules of the novitiate with the spirit of faith.

Brewing Storms

THE first years of Miguel's religious life were peaceful. The brewing storms broke chiefly over the north.

But the news was daily growing more alarming. The political atmosphere around President Porfirio Diaz was charged. Socialists stirred up ill-feeling towards a government savoring of monarchy and aroused the poor and the Indians with flaming speeches against the "tyrant." A bold stroke precipitated a crisis and Diaz fell.

After seven or eight months of turmoil, Francisco Madero was elected president at twenty-eight, on November 6, 1911. On June 7, he entered Mexico City in triumph. But he was powerless to stem the torrent which he himself had let loose.

Ambitious men rose up everywhere; defeated leaders sprang to arms; the President was out-generaled and anarchy reigned su-

preme. In February 1913, Mexico saw the insurgent chieftains fall in a street battle.

Huerta was then the outstanding man. He assumed power for a few months.

Wise and firm legislation marked his short reign which won the gratitude of Catholics. The latter, under Madero's liberal constitution, had already begun to organize. Their influential reviews spread Catholic ideas and promised a Catholic revival. They expected to return a splendid candidate, F. Gamboa, at the coming elections. However, Huerta, who invoked the name of God in the Legislature, determined to remain military dictator until order was restored.

Order was indeed sadly lacking.

A man destined to play a conspicuous part, Venustiano Carranza, governor of Coahuila, had raised an army. Ambition led him further than he intended and, like Pilate, drove him to cruelty. Under pretext of restoring law and order, on March 26, 1913, he drew up a declaration refusing to

acknowledge Huerta as president and marched against him.

Carranza soon found an ally in the bandit Villa, who had recruited an army in the north, and was supported by President Wilson who supplied him with arms.

The tactics of the two insurgents were barbarous. In their southward march they laid everything waste. In January, Durango fell into their hands. On July 8, Guadalajara was stormed. Their prearranged plan was to seize power by undermining the influence of Catholics whom they accused of favoring Huerta. They tortured prisoners, looted property, imprisoned the wealthy and assassinated the leaders captured in battle.

On August 20, Carranza entered Mexico City, Huerta having abdicated on July 15. The reign of terror had come to stay.

The invading army carried banners bearing the words:

"The clergy is obscurantism; Liberty is light."

Liberty was to be dearly paid by the Mexican people. It required sixty thousand soldiers to implant it. The City police were discharged, judges were dismissed. The well-to-do were arrested, found guilty as a matter of course, and shot.

But the main attack was against the clergy. On July 16, the Bishops had issued a joint letter protesting against the violence of the victors. What better pretext to charge them with being the enemies of order!

The anti-religious programme was carried out with sacrilegious ruthlessness. Soldiers broke into churches, scattered the hosts on the pavement and proceeded to dance. Sometimes they fired at the crucifix, the tabernacle and once even at the monstrance during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Villa boasted of having nailed a priest in a coffin and let him starve to death.

Orders posted on the city walls commanded priests to close Catholic schools. Thirty priests who refused were cast into

prison. Religious were banished, Catholic papers suppressed, St. Bridget's church was turned into a stable.

The revolutionary movement fostered by Carranza's new officials spread thoughout the provinces.

Meanwhile Miguel was in peaceful seclusion. After two years' novitiate, he took his first vows on August 15, 1913. The celebration was private. We know through Roberto that for three years Miguel was unable to see his family. To venture on roads infested with troops was unwise.

After his vows, Miguel entered upon the long course of studies which the Society of Jesus prescribes for its members. Life was by no means reposeful nor was the atmosphere conducive to quiet study. News suddenly came that his father reduced to penury had to save his life by flight, and that his invalid mother had set out for Guadalajara.

Putting his whole trust in Providence, he set resolutely to work. Three months elapsed.

The only professor in the house broke down. Miguel, a born organizer, was appointed to replace him or at least to keep the pupils busy for two months. Meanwhile he was beginning to suffer from stomach trouble which he concealed from all by his unfailing cheerfulness.

The school year closed somehow or other, but the situation was fast becoming intolerable.

In Exile

BY July 1914, Carranza's forces had penetrated into the State of Michoacan. The town of Zamora, at no great distance from El Llano, fell into their hands. The "liberators'" programme was so well known that the superiors determined to abandon the novitiate. On August 15, feast of Our Lady's Assumption, the novices dispersed in groups to the neighboring towns or to friendly homes.

Miguel remained hidden in the town for a few days, and at nightfall on August 29, disguised as a peasant and accompanied by a fellow novice, he passed through the insurgents who crowded the roads.

The next day, three other novices joined them and all five cautiously threaded their way towards Guadalajara. For three days they trudged along, occasionally seeking shelter in the woods to evade the soldiers.

On September 2, Miguel, disguised as a servant and shouldering his brethren's traps, marched into town. Thirteen of his companions were there already. His good humour raised their spirits while he had to bear up more than all, for he found his mother, brothers and young sister reduced to extreme poverty. His inability to relieve them added to the grief of his generous heart.

What he had he gave: his time and his heart. Every day he went over to his comrades, taking them for a walk or leading them to some secluded nook where he provided an amusement of his own. To the accompaniment of a guitar, he would sing extemporaneous verses and the saddest faces lit up.

One morning they attended Mass in a certain house; on the morrow, in an other, for after September 15, a new companion joined them, a priest who was moved to enter the Society of Jesus on witnessing the courage of the young novices.

How Miguel longed to be a priest! Meanwhile be did his utmost to comfort the afflicted. Hearing that an old woman was dying without any one to attend her, he went to her house and spent the whole night at her bedside, praying and helping her to pray. She died kissing the crucifix which he held to her lips.

At the end of a month, the order came to cross the boundary. It was a hard blow for Miguel and his mother, but both were inured to suffering.

A Mexican Father who was then Miguel's companion told me how deeply he had been impressed by Mrs. Pro's spirit of faith. He went to see her in a house where she had found shelter. She showed him hanging on the wall, in the place of honor, a picture of the Sacred Heart—all she had brought from Saltillo:

"I am happy," said she, "to have kept nothing but that and to have left everything for Christ. Nothing now remains but the

picture of the Sacred Heart who will bless my house and children!"

The exodus was set for October 2, the First Friday of the month. After High Mass and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the community dispersed in groups. Mrs. Pro went to the station with her children to bid farewell to the son whom she was to see no more.

The fourteen exiles settled at Los Gatos, California, in a house already full of American novices. To lodge them all was a feat of ingenuity.

The newcomers were soon deep in study. They gathered round a table in the library, but there was a shortage of books: only one Spanish grammar for the party! After trying this plan for a time, they moved up to the fourth story, the same hall doing duty both as class-room and dormitory.

Miguel's good humor stood unruffled, meeting every trial with a cheery word.

While out walking he would teach catechism to poor boys—in broken English.

Once he fell in with a large family of gipsies. He made friends with the children, told them stories and then gave them a heart to heart talk on religion, closing the conference with an allround distribution of candy.

Thus passed the year.

Was there any hope of re-entering Mexico ? The political situation looked anything but encouraging.

From September 1914, Mexico was the scene of unrelenting strife between dictators, each one in turn looting the City.

The friendship between Carranza and Villa was soon at an end. Villa who had raised his ally to the forefront, thought he was himself entitled to the presidency.

In the south, another general, Zapata, was claiming land for the poor shepherds (*peones*) whom he had stirred to revolt.

By September 25, the break between the three pretenders was well known. Villa marched northward plundering treasures which he exchanged at the frontier for American arms. He was soon at the head of 30,000 men. Carranza,seeing him move towards Mexico City, fell back on Vera Cruz from which he extorted money. In January 1915, he again managed to take the field. Supported by the famous General Obregon, he defeated Zapata at Puebla, forced Villa to retreat as far as Guadalajara and re-entered Mexico City to begin his work, posing as a radical socialist. Away with the priests, to begin with! Obregon shot down Catholics who had gathered to protest.

Carranza held out in Mexico City till October 19, when the United States recognized him as lawful dictator. Wilson protected him and kept Huerta a prisoner at El Paso. At his death on January 13, 1916, Huerta pardoned him whom he considered the greatest enemy of his country.

Carranza gradually won out, thanks to the hundred thousand rifles and fifty million cartridges graciously supplied by President Wilson.

In December 1916, he was declared president by a sham election in which two per cent of the population—the President's friends—voted. On May 1st, he entered office and lost no time in enacting the famous "Queretaro" constitution (February 5, 1917).

It is a series of insults to justice, human and divine:

"Foreigners can own nothing in Mexico."

"Religious vows are prohibited." (Art. 3.)

"All ecclesiastical property, all churches belong to the State." (Art. 27.)

"The Federal Government reserves to itself the right of enforcing religious laws. It fixes the number of ministers of religion. Foreign priests have no right to exercise their functions. As to Mexican priests they have no more civil rights. It is strictly forbidden to criticize the constitution." (Art. 131.)

IN HIS STUDY

Photo taken the year of his Ordination

These laws were rigorously enforced. Eleven Archbishops and Bishops were deported to the United States; two to Cuba; others to Europe. Hundreds of religious and priests were banished. Two thousand Catholic schools were closed.

The time being ill suited to open a college in Mexico, Miguel's superiors decided to send their students to Spain.

The latter—sixteen in all—left California on June 21, 1915. One of the party has supplied us with notes on the trip.

They stopped first at El Paso, then at New Orleans where they took a day's rest. The train was stifling and they had no food but bread and cheese. Conspicuous in their outlandish garb, they were a target for jokes. What of it? Miguel was there and they made fun of everything. By rapid stages they reached Key West, Florida. At Havana they experienced an unpleasant hold up. The student in charge of tickets and money went on ahead, oblivious of his companions. The

poor travellers, bashful as novices, were arrested and cooped up in a corner of the custom house where they remained four hours awaiting developments. Set upon by reporters, they explained the situation as best they could. The following day the incident, duly enlivened, went round the city.

They boarded the *Buenos Ayres* for New York, whence they sailed for Cadiz. At the end of July they reached Grenada where Miguel was to spend five years studying rhetoric and philosophy.

To live in a foreign country, even with genial hosts, is always trying. If only letters brought good news from home! But reports from Mexico were growing daily more alarming. Miguel, more concerned than any on account of his family in distress, forgot his own anxieties to cheer his compatriots. If one of them seemed despondent, he went to his room, made him laugh for a good half hour and took leave with an apology for disturbing him.

He had ingenious ways of entertaining. One day he proposed a picnic. Permission was hard to obtain. However he began by sending out invitations and preparing provisions. All were jubilant at the mere prospect of an outing.

When everything was ready, he got his party together and said with an air of deep concern:

"Now only one thing is wanting... permission."

Loudly they protested but were reassured when he himself undertook to secure permission from the Rector.

"Father," said he, on entering the latter's room, "will you do us the pleasure of coming on a picnic with the Mexicans?"

—But I am too busy," said the Rector, somewhat taken back.

—They will be so disappointed....

—Of course. But first of all have you permission to go on a picnic?

—No, Father, but we thought that if you came with us permission would be unnecessary.

—But I cannot go, I tell you.

—Well then," he suggested unabashed, "if it disturbs you too much, you know we might perhaps go alone ?' "

The Rector let them go alone.

Miguel was a gifted caricaturist. On entering the novitiate, he was appointed to illustrate the programmes of private festivities. He saw the funny side of men and things and instantly hit it off.

His talent, however, was not confined to the ludicrous. For a whole year, he drew the pictures required to exemplify the biology course. The sketches were chalked on the black-board and vain glory faded away together with the masterpieces.

He practised charity to a degree at times heroic. During an epidemic of 'Spanish Flu,' half the community of over 125 were laid up. Whoever tended the sick was liable to

COLLEGE WHERE MIGUEL WAS A MASTER

be stricken. Miguel was one of the first to offer his services, but his health being poor the superior refused. However he finally yielded to Miguel's natural eloquence. Day and night the later spent himself for fifteen days. Confined in a separate wing, he lived apart from the community. When he espied his companions passing by his window, he would merrily beckon them to come in, and pretend to play the mandolin—his idea of supreme bliss. The invalids still remember his visits; he knew how to revive their drooping spirits. A born actor, he gave his stories such a comic turn that the most melancholy would cheer up.

In the end he himself fell ill and had to take to his bed. His good humor stood the test as if it were the very groundwork of his nature. But one of his superiors who knew him well asserts that his alacrity was prompted by the most deserving charity. He would often amuse others while enduring acute pains in the stomach. While they were

still roaring he would retire to bed racked with agony.

He completed his philosophy in 1920. What was he to do? Return to Mexico?

The government had changed hands, but for the worse. At the beginning of 1919, Carranza, it is true, had suddenly altered his tactics. Catholics grew hopeful; priests could re-enter; the Bishops one after the other returned from exile. On December 27, 1918, a paper gave out that Catholics were to be granted freedom. Carranza himself admitted that the clauses in the constitution respecting religion were too rigorous.

This no doubt partly explains his fall; he was no longer the tool of the Revolution. His end was speedy and tragic. Obregon joined hands with the former governor of the State of Sonora, Calles, and declared war on the President who had just announced elections. Carranza was killed with his son in a street fight.

During the summer of 1920, Obregon prepared the autumn elections. The future was too uncertain to open colleges in Mexico.

Miguel was sent to Granada, Nicaragua, in Central America, where the Mexican Jesuits conducted a day school. That year they decided to take boarders. Everything had to be organized to receive pupils of all ages who had no idea of life in a boarding school.

For two years Miguel took charge, first of the juniors, then of the seniors. The heat in Nicaragua is unbearable, especially at certain seasons of the year. Games naturally flag; it is hard enough to keep alive!

Yet Miguel strove to galvanize his boys. He organized sports and got up raffles the proceeds of which went to purchase new games. He also preached by example. At one o'clock every day, under a broiling sun, he began to play and jump to rouse the laggards. Strange that no protest came from his delicate stomach!

THE STRENUOUS MASTER DRILLING HIS BOYS AT GRANADA, NICARAGUA

Although at times ailing himself, he would at once offer to replace an overworked companion.

The pupils spoke a peculiar dialect; Miguel mastered it in no time. Such thoughtfulness went to the children's hearts. The Father who replaced him remarked that Miguel's pupils often spoke of his devotedness, good humor and self-denial.

In 1922, he returned to Spain without passing through Mexico City where his relatives lived.

The gloomy outlook could not overcloud his sunny disposition. During the crossing, he noticed a poor Chinaman who was writhing in an agony of pain. Miguel came up to him and, with the coolness of a professional, examined the inside of his eyelids, felt his pulse and looked at his tongue. The would-be doctor unhesitatingly prescribed a good dose of castor oil. It has no effect. Quite naturally, as if he expected more trouble, he

ordered a second dose. No result. He ordered a third.

The following morning our Chinaman was pacing the deck with a *celestial* smile, declaring that he was thoroughly cured. He spoke to everybody about the wonderful doctor he had met.

Miguel spent two years in Spain, near Barcelona, at the Colegio Máximo de San Ignacio, Sarriá. In the vicinity is Manresa, so dear to the sons of St. Ignatius. There the founder of the Society of Jesus first made his famous *Spiritual Exercises*. There also, in 1924, Miguel had the hapiness of making his annual retreat during Holy Week. His three companions noted with what fervor he prayed in the *Santa Cueva*.

"I shall never forget that retreat," remarked one of them. "Miguel sought to conceal his penitential spirit under the joy which he shed around him. But our rooms adjoined and every night we could hear him scourge himself mercilessly."

In September 1924, he was at Enghien (Belgium) with the French Jesuits. Thirteen nations were represented. Miguel was soon at home with all of them, for he could speak all their languages. Grammatical niceties did not trouble him; when words failed, his gestures and the play of his features completed the thought which he usually rounded off with a pleasant remark.

At Enghien as in Spain, cheerfulness cost a struggle with ever-increasing stomach pains. It was easy to guess from what source sprang such meritorious charity.

At the beginning of January 1925, Father Raoul Plus gave a series of lectures at Enghien on "the gift of oneself to God and souls." The doctrine of God's presence in us through grace, so admirably expounded by Father Plus, made a deep impression on Miguel. He would sometimes allude to that appealing thought.

A friend who knew that he was a prey to insomnia, wondered how he could always look happy and rested.

"Oh!".....he explained, "one is never alone!"

He was often seen kneeling in the chapel, his eyes on the Tabernacle. The great day was at hand, about to crown the wish of his life.

First Fruits

HE was ordained on August 31, 1925, by Bishop Lecomte. After the ceremony the new priests were greeted by their relatives. Father Pro would have wished to bring down his first blessing on his mother's head. He felt sad, but raising his thoughts:

"After all," said he, "we are priests.... And that is enough.."

Far from his own, but close to God, he repeated throughout the day a prayer which was to be wonderfully fulfilled. Later on he said to a friend:

"On the day of my ordination, I merely asked Our Lord to be useful to souls."

The grace of the priesthood was daily expanding his soul. Every Mass transformed him. He no longer felt the same. A few months after his ordination, he wrote to a Mexican co-novice, Benjamin C. who was to be ordained during the summer of 1926.

My dear Brother in Jesus Christ,

Yesterday I received your post card announcing the glad news of your early promotion to the priesthood. Thank you for such good news and thank God for so great a benefit.

My dear little Father C., if instead of scribbling a letter I could chat with you for half an hour, I would tell you what a comfort it was to be officially informed that you are going up to the altar. I am in the habit of joking, but to-day I wish to speak to you in all sincerity. For nearly a year I have had the happiness of going up to the altar—a happiness which has nothing of the earth earthy, but is lofty, spiritual and divine.

Rid yourself for ever of the old Benjamin. Willing or not, you will undergo a radical transformation. The Holy Ghost will give Himself to you in a special way on the day of your ordination. He will destroy what is too human in your poor earthy heart. You will yourself be astonished to see the change—in melius—

Solà Cômo, a Mexican priest, on the day of his first Mass; his little sister is receiving First Communion from him.

This zealous priest did untold good, in a quiet way, among Mexican Catholics. The agents of Calles identified him by means of the above photo. He was shot on April 25, 1927, as he uttered the words: "For Thy Cause I die, O Lord!"

in that poor human nature which plays us such ugly turns—a change not only in the main lines of your new life but in the minute details of your daily life.

Have I the same will? Is my way of thinking, judging, deciding, the same? Are the ideals of holiness cherished during the long years of my religious life really the same?

My dear little Father Benjamin, if you trust the experience of a poor miner, be sure that you will no longer be to-morrow what you are to-day.

There is something in me which I had never felt before and which makes me understand things quite differently. It is not the fruit of study, nor of our more or less robust holiness, nor of anything personal and human. It is due to the priestly character which the Holy Ghost impresses on our souls.

It is a closer participation in divine life, elevating and deifying us; a greater strength to make us accomplish desires and aspirations hitherto beyond our power.

This change, however, was unfelt until I came in touch with souls. False humility aside, let me throw open my poor brotherly heart. During my theology, in one way or another I was engaged for nearly six months in mission work. Our Lord was pleased to use me as an instrument to do good. How many souls I comforted! How many sorrows I soothed! With what courage I inspired men to tread the narrow way! Two shaky vocations were confirmed. A student intending to quit the seminary renewed his resolve to do the will of God.

All that was evidently not my work. I have only to consider my way of acting, my temperament, my inclinations and studies. At times, I meant to say: black, *and I said* white, *when* white *was the right thing to say.*

Can I boast of my natural gifts when they would obviously have been without effect?

Whatever good I have done is clearly due to the grace of the priesthood, to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to something above nature. I had not felt that before my ordination.

See, I am a ready pulpit speaker and give lessons to my betters. But out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh and I am overhwelmed with the graces which the Lord has lavished on me since the happy day of my ordination. I can but repeat with the Prophet: De stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eum cum principibus populi sui. . . .

You are about to receive the same grace as I did. My joy on hearing that induced me to scribble this wretched letter, without plan or order, but with intense satisfaction.

Good-bye! The Lord bless you! Not a single day have I forgotten you at Mass, and be sure that I will henceforth bear you specially in mind to thank God and obtain that your preparation be the worthiest...

Your brother in the Heart of Jesus,

Your little MIGUEL.

— May 27, 1926.

During September, the new priests did a little mission work. Father Pro, being far

from home, obtained leave to visit his friends, the toilers in the mines. At Charleroi, he went down with them into the pit. On ascending, he refused a shower bath in order to mix more easily with the miners on their way home.

In Belgium, workmen travel in special coaches reserved for them. Many of them being socialists, it would require a daring priest to venture in with them. Father Pro did venture in by a pretended misunderstanding. The reception was anything but encouraging. Surprised at the priest's boldness, the miners remained silent.

Suddenly one of them who was busy eating, put a question to intimidate the unwelcome visitor.

"Father," said he, "do you know with whom you are?"

—No... With whom?

—We are socialists.

—Oh, how fortunate!" replied the Father undismayed, "so am I a socialist.

—How, you ?

—Yes....Only," he continued, scratching his forehead, "there is something I never could understand. When we shall have all the rich people's money, how shall we manage to keep it ?"

The workman finding no answer, evaded the issue by saying:

"There are also communists with us.

—Communists, oh, how glad I am! I am also a communist. See, it is one o'clock, you are eating; well, I am also hungry; will you not share with me ?"

The workman quite taken back by such composure, looked at his companions wondering what to do.

The conversation began again:

"You are not afraid to enter our compartment ?

—Afraid ? Why ? I am always armed!"

The workmen eyed one another, astounded at such an extraordinary priest.

The Father then drew a crucifix from his pocket and pointing to it, said:

"Here are my arms; with that I am not afraid."

And he explained the love of Jesus Christ for workmen.

A workman got off at the first station, bought a chocolate bar and shared it with the Father. Before separating, they all shook hands with him.

On retiring to his cell that night the young priest must have realized that God had heard the prayer of his ordination day, when he asked to be useful to souls.

But before coming into closer touch with them, he was to sow the seed of his future harvest in a trial dreaded by the most ardent apostles: illness and separation from his brethren. The trial lasted four months.

In November, his fits of stomach trouble became more frequent. The doctors ordered an operation. Unmoved, he said to a group of friends:

"I am ready to die at once."

To the Spiritual Father who advised him to undergo the operation, he replied:

"I am not afraid of physical pain!"

It was an old friend. . . .

An operation, while successful, may lead to complications. Father Pro suffered much; no one would have guessed it, however. The attending Sister was always convulsed with laughter, and the friends who came enjoyed a pleasant visit.

The second operation was more painful; it had to be performed without chloroform and was followed by excruciating pains. Every particle of food burnt the stomach.

Recovery was far from complete. In January, a third operation was mooted. The future appeared no brighter than the present, but the invalid uttered no complaint. Insomnia enabled him to spend almost whole nights in prayer.

From Mexico nothing was forthcoming but distressing news. Calles had embarked on

his career of cruelty to the Church and to Catholics.

Father Pro was alone with his anxieties. All he knew of his family was that his mother was very unwell. He had always been in close touch with her. Well informed, she often wrote to her dear Miguel. Just before the third operation, he received this short note from her:

"I am ageing every day, I fear that you will not find me here on your return to Mexico. I believe that God requires of me the sacrifice of not seeing you at the altar."

Nor did she see him again. She died on February 8, 1926, a few days after the farewell note. Father Pro was ready for the trial. He offered it in behalf of souls, the dear souls for whom he had prayed on the day of his ordination.

Invalids are naturally selfish; at times the most virtuous are no longer themselves. To think of others in illness calls for extraordinary holiness.

Father Pro thought only of others.

The third operation did not complete his cure and he remained weak through loss of appetite. The air of the Mediterranean, it was thought, would more speedily restore his health. He resided till June in Provence, in a house kept by Franciscan nuns.

There he underwent treatment while time bore heavily upon him. One of his Mexican companions studying in Spain inquired if he wanted anything. He replied (April 20, 1926):

"What I want?

1. "Patience; because mine after being used for so many years is wearing down;

2. "Work; because this idle life is not congenial to my character and nervous temperament;

3. "An old camel; one with a hollow in the back to serve as a seat when I go visiting hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, nuns and nurses;

4. "The spirit of faith (in case the camel is not forthcoming) to absorb a medley of pharmaceutical products. To my mind there is only one remedy: castor oil."

Then after giving the list of drugs he has to take every day, he concluded:

"What a life!"

The apostle could not brook inactivity. When able to walk, he went over the town in quest of souls to lead Godward. These rambles scored a distinct success, which he ascribed to his mother's intercession: "She is in heaven," said he, "cooperating with me to save souls."

He was convinced that she already enjoyed the reward of her virtues. One day he exclaimed with deep conviction:

"My mother is in heaven. This morning I wished to say Mass for the repose of her soul, but could not pray. I am sure she is in heaven."

His zeal was undeterred by anything or anybody. Once he spent a whole afternoon

chatting with an antiquarian and taking an interest in his knicknacks, so that he might, towards evening, broach the subject of religion. Another time he was induced, on a false report, to visit a man supposed to be dying. The latter was tremendously alive and prepared to belabor the bold intruder who sought to win him over with kind words. Father Pro chuckled as he made good his escape.

He had more success with a young man who had the reputation of being an uncompromising anti-clerical. His aversion to the clergy arose from the fact that when a student he had been unjustly expelled from school. By dint of kindness, sweets and cigarettes, Father Pro coaxed him to tell his story. He then instructed him and at the end of a month got him to make his First Communion.

He spent himself lovingly when he met souls to save, above all the simple souls of the poor. One day he passed near a station where workmen were pouring in to catch

the train. He gazed at them wistfully and said to his companion pointing to the procession in overalls:

"Those are the souls I love!"

In a long letter to his friends in Spain he related a visit to some famous villas whose inmates led a lordly life. He was not interested and ended his letter with the remark:

"From the nobility let us come down to the ragamuffins. There I am a king. . . .

"I thank God for granting me the dignity of the priesthood; what a comfort for my soul! I gave peace to a divided family, Communion to a child of ninety-three; I heard the confession of an old Italian workman, and to a communist plying bill and rake, I taught catechism!"

(Signed) THE MINER.

In the course of June, he received an order from his Provincial recalling him to Mexico.

His health was still very weak, but the prospect of laboring among his own in danger

overshadowed his illness. He set out for Northern France by way of Lourdes. A long night in the train, and at morning he knelt before the miraculous Virgin. In a few weeks, thought he, he would likewise be at the feet of the Virgin of Guadalupe, ere he undertook the tremendous task of ministering to his persecuted brethren.

That night, on taking the train for Paris, he wrote:

"I cannot express what my poor soul feels to-day. I said Mass, made an hour's meditation before our good Mother, and recited the rosary. Now I go forth comforted!"

At the end of June he sailed for Mexico.

In the Tempest

THE situation of Catholics in Mexico was deplorable. It is necessary to realize their difficulties in order to appreciate the task confronting Father Pro.

While Obregon was president (1920-24) Catholics had some respite. The soldier whose career was to end so sadly had apparently only two objectives in view: power and money. Whatever did not conflict therewith he tolerated.

The Catholic Association of Mexican Youth made enormous strides from 1920 on. Social questions were debated in their clubs and the membership rose steadily. Children were enlisted by thousands in the Eucharistic League.

Things were going well, rather too well.

On May 12, 1921, Government troops entered a church at Morelia and proceeded to eject the faithful. A few members of the

A. C. J. M. were killed. In November an attempt was made to dynamite the church of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The first act of the drama had begun; the famous Constitution framed by Carranza, then mitigated by him, was rigorously applied. The supply of priests began to fail.

In 1923 an incident showed that hostilities had not ceased. Nine years before, in July 1914, the Bishops had bound themselves to erect a national church in honor of the Sacred Heart in the very centre of Mexico. In 1923, they considered that the time had come to fulfil their promise. They chose Mount Cubile as a suitable spot to raise a statue to Christ,—the church was to be built in better times. The Papal delegate, Mgr. Filippi, laid the corner stone in the presence of fourteen Bishops and over seventy thousand Mexicans from all over the country.

So widespread was the enthusiasm that the authorities could do nothing to prevent the ceremony. Out of spite they insulted the

Bishops, expelled the delegate and forced a number of priests out of their churches.

But the Catholics, better organized than ever, had no intention of tamely submitting. In the autumn of 1924, they determined to hold a great national Eucharistic Congress in Mexico City itself. Faith was rekindled in many hearts, the weakest were roused. The streets were beflagged as for the coming of a king. On the appointed day the Bishops entered the cathedral amid a concourse of several thousand citizens. An eight-foot monstrance studded with diamonds, called the "Monstrance of National Reparation," was set up in atonement for the outrages done to the Eucharistic Lord during the last ten years of terror.

Obregon had given the Bishops the required authorization. The wife of the Minister of Finance had even put hangings over the windows of her house to do honor to the passing Host. Suddenly Obregon changed his mind. At the instigation of freemasons

enraged by such demonstrations of faith, he declared with feigned indignation that Catholics had violated the constitution.

But his term was ending, as the Constitution of Queretaro provides that no president shall reign more than four years.

On July 6, 1924, elections were held and Plutarco Elias Calles, former governor of the State of Sonora, was elected.

The latter's success is readily explained. There were two candidates in the field: Flores, the people's friend, and Calles whom Obregon favored. The contest was unequal. Calles could rely on the soldiers of the retiring president and on the arms supplied by his American friends.

The name of Calles, like that of Nero, will go down to posterity. Nero betrayed his noble blood—the only crime beyond the power of Calles to commit. As a schoolmaster in a little village, Calles had formerly been noted for his cruelty and intemperance. Brazenness and the support of wicked men

in quest of an executioner carried him to power where he maintained himself by craft and bloodshed.

Like Nero also, this successful bully began well. After his election, he went to Europe where the heads of the great republics, unaware, or feigning to be unaware, of Mexico's true history, received him with great honor.

On his return, he preserved a sphynxlike silence for two months, inducing Catholics to think that an era of peace had set in.

At the beginning of 1925, they were rudely undeceived. Calles' dream was to ape the French Revolution and to follow in the footsteps of Russia. He resolved at any cost to rid his country of religious superstition. He closed Catholic schools, depriving children of education. Priests were practically unable to exercise their ministry.

Calles himself took charge of the all round reformation. In one of his first messages to the nation, he proclaimed that "he would light up as with a torch the darkest recesses of the Mexican mountains."

The illumination began in earnest in 1926. Foreign priests were ordered out of the country. The others were told to accept the atheistic Constitution of 1917. The Archbishop of Mexico City protested. On February 4, he was brought to court as a traitor to his country. Everywhere nuns were turned out of their convents amid scenes of unspeakable barbarism.

In the procession organized by the Government to celebrate carnival, appeared Calles' own daughter, who,—be it said without disparaging her father's memory,—had been educated at the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Peace.

She was proclaimed "Goddess of Mexico" in the streets of the Capital. Mock processions were organized. Soldiers dressed like monks marched with disorderly women, shouting foul words.

Catholics did not stand silent spectators of such infamy. They protested vigorously. On one occasion, Calles received a voluminous

bundle containing two million signatures. The Knights of Columbus had leaflets printed which were distributed by members of the A. C. J. M.

But Calles was obdurate. On March 5, 1926, he made this declaration: "So long as I am president, the Constitution of 1917 shall remain in force."

On April 3, he added:

"To-day we must begin a formidable struggle, a struggle against the past, a struggle against things to be obliterated for ever from the earth. The activities of certain rich men and certain aristocrats seek to bar our progress. It is incredible that in this country there should still be reactionaries who consider it possible in an age of social revolution to raise the standard of religion and provoke another civil war. But the Government is determined to carry out its programme regardless of the grimaces of sacristans and the protests of lazy monks. It is incredible that in our age people should still attempt

to check progress and stir up a revolution in the name of religion."

The press agencies of the world were apparently in ignorance of the atrocities of the Mexican Government.

A few voices here and there were raised in protest. The Pope and the Mexican Bishops branded Calles as a tyrant and bade his victimes take courage.

In March 1926, Pius XI wrote to the Mexican Catholics, endorsing the Bishops' protestation against the Constitution of 1917. He asked all Catholic organizations to join in the struggle while eschewing politics.

A month later the Bishops reaffirmed the Pope's wishes in a splendid pastoral. They fearlessly demanded the reform of the Constitution.

Calles was cruel in his retort.

In the first days of July 1926, he promulgated a new law in thirty-three articles, outdoing the anti-religious clauses of 1917.

"Art. 3.—Religious instruction is forbidden in all public and private schools."

"Art. 6.—All the establishments of religious Orders are suppressed."

"Art. 10.—Any criticism of the laws and authorities, even in private meetings, is prohibited under severe penalties."

"Art. 12.—No Seminary curriculum shall be accepted by the State."

"Art. 17.—All religious exercises shall be strictly confined to the inside of churches, which shall be under State supervision."

"Art. 18.—It is forbidden to wear a clerical garb outside of churches."

"Art. 21.—All churches, religious buildings, asylums or convents are declared State property."

The thirty-three articles were posted up at the door of all the churches, to become effective on July 31, 1926.

Calles received a gold medal from the Lodges with their congratulations. He was striking at the heart of Mexican Catholicism

HUMBERTO, of the A.C.J.M.
Shot, November 23, 1927
(aged 24)

ROBERTO
Exiled by Calles
(aged 23)

MIGUEL
Shot
November 23, 1927
(aged 36)

and the Bishops realized that the people had to be thoroughly roused.

Six days before the baleful laws become effective, the eight Archbishops and twenty-eight Bishops pronounced excommunication against all who took part in carrying out the new laws.

"The conditions imposed by them", they declared, "render all ministration impossible. After an understanding with the Sovereign Pontiff and with his blessing and approval, we order that from July 31, and until such order is repealed, every public religious exercise or function requiring the service of a priest, be suspended in all the churches of the Republic. The churches will not be closed, the faithful may still enter them to pray, but the priest in charge must withdraw. We entrust the churches to the care of the faithful. They will guard with a jealous care, we trust, the shrines which they inherited from their forefathers....

"Lastly, let us derive courage from the words of Christ to His Apostles when He foretold His coming death and resurrection:

"Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: And after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again."

"The life of the Church is that of her Founder. Like Him, the Church in Mexico has been delivered to her worst enemies; she is mocked, and scourged and put to death, as it were. But soon she will rise again full of life and youth, more comely than of yore. . . ."

Father Pro arrived in time to share in the passion of his country.

"The train from Vera Cruz," he wrote to his friends (November 13, 1926), reached Mexico City on the 8th (July) at 7. An

hour after, I was at Lerdo; at 9, I left with the Provincial; at 10, I was admitted into the residence of Enrico Martinez as an 'Elderly Father' and at 2 P. M., I ate beans and the longed-for....*tortillas* (corn pancakes) which twelve years ago used to create an insatiable craving in my lower nature."

It seemed as if everything had conspired to let him in.

"By an extraordinary permission of God" he added, "I was able to re-enter my native country. The Government being what it is, expelling priests and religious, I don't know how I managed to get in. The Board of Health passed me over. No one examined my passports. The customs officers did not even glance at my baggage."

On reaching home, he found his father, his sister Ana Maria and his young brother Roberto. Humberto who had displayed too much zeal in religious propaganda, was in prison. Father Pro, after many unsuccessful attempts, managed to gain admittance to

him. Seventeen months later they were again united in martyrdom.

Father Pro started at once on his apostolic career. "Still half dazed by the trip, I began an uninterrupted series of missions among the inhabitants of the Capital who, thank God, gave me work day and night and will apparently not let me finish this letter. I have been interrupted three times. I do not mention the outburst of faith provoked by the closing of churches. You have no doubt heard all about it through other sources." (November 13, 1926.)

He was alluding to the effect produced by the Bishops' pastoral.

Hardly had the Bishops spoken when a wave of enthusiasm swept over the country. Churches filled; the faithful poured in from all sides, anxious to receive a last absolution and attend the last Mass. Ladies walked barefooted alongside of their poorer sisters, while the hills re-echoed their penitential hymns....

LORD, WHY DIDST THOU DEPART?

"When I re-entered Mexico City," wrote Father Pro, "all religious services were about to be suspended. Thousands of the faithful flocked to receive the sacraments. I had to remain in the confessional from 5.30 to 11 A. M. and from 3 to 8 P. M. As I was still rather weak—my last home in Europe having been the hospital—I had twice to be removed fainting from the confessional..."

Then came the mournful day, July 31. What feelings it must have stirred in the young Jesuit! It was the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola. On that day, he celebrated his last public Mass.

Everywhere the Blessed Sacrament was removed from ciboriums, tabernacles were vacated, sanctuary lamps extinguished, bells hushed. The atmosphere of the catacombs settled down, sadness spread over the unfortunate land; Mexico's long Good Friday had begun.

Months passed and the temples remained empty. To be unable to speak of God in

His own house weighed on Father Pro's apostolic heart.

Mass had to be celebrated secretly, in private houses. Stealthily ciboriums were filled and the Host borne by heroic priests continued to fortify souls.

Father Pro gives an idea of the work thus accomplished:

"When public worship was suspended in churches, I organized what were called 'Communion Stations.' They were various places where I went to give Holy Communion every day. On the First Fridays there was a considerable increase; on the last First Friday I distributed 1,200 Communions.

In another letter, he added:

"I distribute from two to three hundred Communions daily. This keeps me busy till 8 A. M.; then I hear confessions regularly Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons."

After laboring for three months, he gave his Provincial an account of his ministrations.

"Here work is hard and continuous. What the Great Chieftain accomplishes through me strikes me with admiration. What with the sick, the wretched, the forlorn, I have no time to think. Yet I am so well and strong that, despite slight, very slight, setbacks, I could carry on till doomsday. . . . I am ready for anything, but, if there is no serious drawback, let me ask to spend the present and the following periods here.

"What a blessing if I could join those who are to be hanged at *Pegasos del Zocalo;* that would settle my final examination!" (October 21, 1926.)

Amid his apostolic labors, Father Pro often thought of his final examination in theology, still to be undergone. Until the very end, he tried to snatch spare moments to prepare it. Submitting, however, to the wish of his superior, he wrote:

"My professors at Enghien had given me the theses of the final examination; I had begun to prepare and would have passed

had not your cablegram ordered me home. The professors urged me to remain eight days more, during which time, they claimed, I might have passed. But feeling that my head could not stand the strain, I declined... Of course I am ready to do whatever you think advisable. That is why I assured you personally that I leave everything, everything, in your hands, considering it beforehand for the best.

"In closing, let me ask you for a favor. The third year of Probation calls me... Shall I hearken to its voice? Perhaps Fr. A. needs a companion? That was indeed my dream, and although I am not superstitious, I trust that my dream will come true." (October 21, 1926.)

Calles was dealing with men who meant to defend themselves. He needed a whole army of bandits to cope with the Catholic reaction.

The League for the Defence of Religious Liberty struck the Government in a vital

spot by organizing a nation-wide strike, to become effective on July 31. It consisted in Catholics binding themselves to confine their purchases to bare necessaries and to withdraw whatever money they had in the banks.

Factories under anti-clerical control suddenly lost their customers. In less than a month twenty-seven million pesos were withdrawn from the banks and transferred abroad. Cafés were practically deserted.

The friends of Calles lost heart. In October the Minister of Finance, Pani, resigned. The President would not give in. Nor would the Catholics. When he imprisoned the suspected leaders of the movement, others replaced them. He closed printing establishments which worked against him or which he suspected of doing so. From cellars issued leaflets printed during the night by fearless youths.

On one of these leaflets it was stated that the Communist Calles, the friend of the poor, owned an immense rural property and

that he had built for himself a luxurious train costing a million pesos.

Calles was incensed. On September 1, at the opening of Congress, he announced that he had already closed 129 Catholic colleges, 42 churches, chapels and benevolent institutions and promised to continue.

Fancy his indignation when Catholics spread leaflets like the following:

"In his pastoral instruction on the feast of Christ the King, the Archbishop of Mexico City thus addressed his flock: 'Be of good courage: the image of Jesus Crucified will bear you up in trial... Remember that the faith and eternal salvation of all Mexican Catholics are in jeopardy. You must not weaken; you must do violence to Christ and His Mother to wrest from Divine Mercy the incomparable grace of celebrating the Marial Feasts from December 8 to 12 in our beloved shrines. . . . We paternally exhort you all, dear sons, to increase the fervor of your prayers and the generosity of your self-denial and sacrifices. . . .'

"The League for the Defence of Religious Liberty, regarding this declaration as a command from God, orders that the boycott be extended throughout the Republic with the utmost rigor, from November 12.

"Let the movement be complete and nation-wide; let all Mexican Catholics, all to a man, unite, at the appointed date, in a general boycott: boycott of luxuries, dainties, dresses, lottery tickets, bull fights, movies, concerts; boycott of outings, balls, circuses and other games; boycott of autos, carriages, tramways; in a word, boycott of everything not absolutely necessary.

"Great are our difficulties, for this persecution binds us hand and foot. . . . But we must not lose heart. God is with us, fighting with us. It behooves us, enlightened Catholics, to become ardent apostles, teaching by word and pen. . . ."

Father Pro always had his pockets full of leaflets. He was once arrested in front of the house where he resided and was

compelled to get into an auto. He sat near the chauffeur who was ordered to drive him to the Police Commissioner's. Before getting

SPECIMEN OF PROPAGANDA STAMPS
On this stamp are the words:
"Calles, Christ has overcome stronger men than you!"

there he had to empty his pockets at all costs. Engaging the driver in conversation he quietly dropped the leaflets as he went along.

The propagandists were watched. When caught, they were shot. The martyrdom of two youths, Manuel Melgarejo and Joaquin de Silva Cordoba, shocked the Catholic world. General Zepeda, a secret partisan of Calles, questioned them on their religious

ideas. They were arrested and shot, their last words being: "Long live Christ the King!"

But the people were not cowed by this reign of terror. In a single pilgrimage, fifty thousand pilgrims repaired to Our Lady of Guadalupe on October 12. The feast of Christ the King saw over two hundred thousand gathered there.

Father Pro attended the celebration which he thus narrated to his friends:

"On October 31, feast of Christ the King, took place here the grandest, sublimest, divinest manifestation. . . .

"The pilgrimage to the Basilica began at 4 A. M., and ended at 7.30 P. M. An unbroken line of people—ninety or ninety-five per cent from Mexico City—passed before the blessed picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Members of the A. C. J. M. kept such perfect order that the municipality of Guadalupe congratulated the Archbishop.

"I was there from 9 till 11 A. M. and from 3 to 6 P. M. Impossible to tear myself

away. Thousands were barefooted, others went up Persevillo Avenue on their knees, all reciting the rosary and singing. Rich and poor, workmen and employers were grouped together. I saw a well-to-do family, eight persons, all barefooted, the father carrying the shoes of the rest. I saw a young man of the best society with bloodstained feet trudging along the avenue, rosary in hand. I saw some twenty old women,—but this was not to my taste,—wearing crowns of thorns on their heads. I saw Mgr. Mora y del Rio arrive at 4 P. M. like an ordinary pilgrim and heard him cheered to the echo within the Basilica and without. At 5 P. M. I was returning with Mendez M... when we espied a group of resolute-looking workmen singing on their way to the Basilica.

"But the singing was rather 'subdued.'

" 'Friend,' said I to my companion, 'now is the time,' and elbowing my way into the group, supported by my companion's powerful voice, I bellowed: 'Thy kingdom come!'

When these good people saw two choir masters in charge, they waxed enthusiastic and the singing was superb!!! Soon our voices surged above the thousands surrounding the esplanade of the Basilica, and five minutes after all were singing in chorus and acclaiming Christ the King, the Pope and the Bishops. There was no disorder, although the firemen arrived at 8 A. M. and General Cruz twice inspected the Basilica. The youthful organizers kept order everywhere while the policemen spent the day supporting trees but without interfering. Poor people! they were the first to side with us! The Red Cross behaved admirably, and yet they are usually hard nuts to crack... *Mexico City is Catholic indeed!* Our Lady of Guadalupe is Queen of the Mexicans!

"The terrible trial now facing us produced not only more steadfast Catholics but also martyrs. For what other title can be given to those twenty valiant members of the A. C. J. M. ruthlessly assassinated, and to

many others whose names are unknown, the press being muzzled.

"Victory is at hand. Our formidable foes, upheld by money, arms and deceit, will soon crumble to dust like Daniel's statue struck by a stone from heaven....

"The Shepherd who guides the unarmed people of Guadalupe will soon smite the head of the Mexican Government and Christ alone will reign, Christ alone will overcome, Christ alone will command.

"The splendor of the Resurrection is already in the air because the darkness of the Passion is almost at its thickest.

"Outrages and reprisals are reported on all sides; many are the victims; the list of martyrs daily lengthens....Oh! could I but draw the lucky number....

"The Holy Father has promised, as you may have heard, to canonize our young martyrs. He himself donated to the Basilica of Guadalupe the monstrance presented to to him by France.

"Such a fatherly interest on the part of the Roman Pontiff made a deep impression on our people."

Yours in Domino

EL BARRETERO (The Miner)

The Catholics rose to the occasion. Debarred from teaching in schools, they organized itinerant catechists who travelled over the country. By mid-October, 397 catechists in thirty-two districts reached nearly 11,000 children. The priests had to train the laity, especially the members of the A. C. J. M. Father Pro himself received them in several places. Although he was in hiding the initiated knew where to find him.

"No one knows where I am," he wrote. "At four different addresses I receive letters, messages and beans for destitute families. . . . I also impart advice in these various haunts."

Calles had much ado to maintain his stand. On October 19, the Tampico Bank

failed; on the following day, the English Bank. The Chambers of Commerce, in dismay, confessed their inability to meet the situation. Calles dissolved them.

But the treasury was empty. In December the situation grew desperate; insurrections broke out everywhere; the *pesos* lost half its value. Calles held the priests responsible for all the troubles. At his wits' end, he sought to bribe them. He asked them to form a Mexican National Church, independent of Rome, promising to restore religious buildings and part of the Church property.

They refused flatly.

Calles, in high dudgeon, re-enacted the laws of July 31, and prohibited the spreading of leaflets, even handwritten.

A Minister of the Calles cabinet, Morones, speaking in Congress, advised the people to kill all the priests. Meanwhile priests and Bishops were deported or imprisoned.

"There is a terrible dearth of priests," wrote Father Pro. "The people are dying

without the sacraments and the few remaining priests are overburdened"....

Such a sad condition whetted his zeal and spurred him on to action.

"The Catholics are making a stand," he wrote, "reprisals will be terrible, especially in Mexico City. The first to suffer will be those who *had a hand* in religious matters.... I have had mine up to the elbow!....God grant that I be among the first, or—from another standpoint—among the last; at all events, among those to confess Christ!

"In that case *prepare to send your petitions when I am in heaven*"....

This recalls the shower of roses promised by the Little Flower before dying!

At times the goal seemed within reach. In December 1926, he was imprisoned but managed to escape. He had no intention of throwing his life away. So many poor people needed him!

The Friend of the Poor

HIS heart went out to the poor who claimed most of his time. All things to all men, he had his own way of carrying out the Pauline words:

"Day and night, I am in the carpeted mansions, the slimy taverns and the loathsoms slums of the Capital. *Devout women* revere me, drunkards hobnob with me, vendors wink at me, the flower and cream of rascality take me to their heart!" (November 13, 1926.)

The poor are really his own. By February 1927, he had a powerful organization for their relief.

"To keep busy," said he, "I *quietly* lay in supplies of grain and provisions and even vacant houses for the families of the brave young men who are upholding our liberties. I have several agents to collect, store away and then distribute supplies to the most

needy. So far eighteen families have provisions for two months." (Letter to his Provincial, February 19.)

"I see instances of what occurs in the lives of the saints (Pray, do not think that I mistake myself for one of them!) I know not how, nor when, nor from whom, but one day I received a hundred pounds of sugar; another time, biscuits, coffee, chocolate, rice and even wine. Providence is so kind that when I begin to wonder whom I am to turn to next, I find, to my surprise, my storeroom well stocked."

Strangers unsolicited anticipated his wants:

"Having been away for years, I am little known here but easily find homes for the destitute. The best of it is that I have not to risk my precious person. I pull wires and generous souls do the rest.

"My boldness knows no bounds. I once received a present of two hundred pounds of worm-eaten beans, worth absolutely no-

thing. I went to the giver and asked him to let me have a few beans, remarking that *our* alms were not worth much, as worms had got into them. . . ."

Good beans were soon on the way.

Father Pro labored all day and openly for his poor; then he worked far into the night, foreseeing the needs of the morrow, receiving people in want or young men under his guidance.

"How can I accomplish such a task?" he wrote. "I am still rather weak; in fact, I am hardly out of the hospital. This shows that I should have dropped everything had I not been helped by a superhuman power, and been an instrument in God's hand. I am not working; God's grace is working in me."

His poor grew daily in numbers, requiring abundant alms to feed and lodge them. He had not a moment's respite.

"Blessed be Jesus! I have no time to breathe, I am overwhelmed with work, feeding the hungry—and they are legion. Like

the whirwind I am everywhere at once, undisturbed by a message like the following:

"The X family: no food; they are twelve; clothes in rags; three of them in bed; neither salt nor water.

"My purse is usually as flat as Calles' higher aspirations, but no use bothering; the heavenly Purveyor is so magnanimous!

"Here is an instance:

"Mr. Barretero (Mr. Miner), here are one hundred dollars given to me for you.

—Keep them for me; just now there is nothing urgent."

Now understand that this is history.

"Two streets away, I had to write a pressing card:

"Of the hundred dollars, send forty to A, forty to B and twenty to C."

"I see God's help so clearly that I am *almost* afraid of not being killed on my rounds—which would be disastrous for me who long to go to heaven to play the guitar with my guardian angel.

"People give me articles to raffle; those worth ten dollars bring in forty.

"Once I was carrying a lady's handbag, very pretty (I mean the bag, not the lady), when I met a lady thickly rouged—*ut in pluribus:*

—'What's that', she said ?

" 'A lady's bag, worth twenty-five dollars, but you may have it for fifty! Please send the money to the X family' . . . .

"Such an appeal was irresistible," added the Father. (Letter of May 25, 1927.)

A month before his execution he gave one of his cousins a detailed account of his charitable works.

"If I delayed writing it is because of my many engagements in the suburbs of the Capital. I cannot keep track of conversions, Communions and baptisms. . . . There are over half a dozen marriages a week. . . . endless sick calls. . . . untold numbers have their passports viseed for the other world.

"Such are my 'secondary' occupations; the essential ones which take up most of

my time consist in providing for the needy. The wretchedness inseparable from such times as these is indescribable. We have to supply twenty-six families with everything from A to Z. So much the better! There is no room for vain glory. God's intervention is revealed in all its loveableness.

"How true it is that He who feeds the birds of the air does not suffer the sons whom He created and redeemed with His Precious Blood to die of hunger!

"My staff consists of half a dozen pious women and as many pious men out of work. In public, I call the former: "Investigation and Commissariat Section!"' Between ourselves they are: "Beggars on the go!" They sneak in everywhere like rats and return every month with bags full of coffee, corn, rice, sugar and lard; by the 25th or the 28th there is not a grain in the bags, shake them as you will.

"The men are publicly known as 'The Board of Management,' but I nickname

them: 'Purveyors of the Idle,' because they waylay people for alms to feed God's royal army of out-of-works.

"In several districts of the Capital, special supply commissions attend to local wants. To these we give only when something remains over, as our principle is not to be stingy with God's purse nor to lack confidence by hoarding from month to month. If this is economically foolish, let me say that humanly speaking the greater folly is to undertake to feed hundreds of families without assured funds.

"There are from four to six members in the less numerous families; ten or twelve in the others. They have the bad habit of eating three times a day, generally with a good appetite. Were that all, it would be an easy matter, but like other sons of Adam and Eve, they live under a roof and the rent must be paid; they wear shoes which give out and clothes which make holes; they manage to be ill and demand remedies.

"Of course, our resources are not equal to such varied wants, but I appeal to friendly doctors who give their services for nothing, while wealthy proprietors loan me houses for six or eight months with leases receipted and even stamped. Unfortunately I am not in with tailors and shoemakers, otherwise I should not have to worry about problems like this: six pairs of shoes at $12.00: $72.00, and I have only $20.00.

"'Therefore,' as my professor of ethics used to say, 'wriggle out of it.'

His task was no sinecure. He spent part of his days begging and was at pains to fill his bags.

"Cereals abound," he informed his cousin on August 5, 1927, "but to be frank, they cost me many a blush. You cannot imagine what a shame it is to be always begging.... Happily He for Whom we labor is not sparing of His gifts. Glory be to Him for even!"

Father Pro spent the last months of his life at the house of a very charitable woman,

THE HOUSE OF MRS. MONTES DE OCA

Altar on which Father Pro said Mass during the last months of his life

Mrs. J. Montes de Oca. Arrested at the same time as the Father, she was imprisoned and, after his death, deported to the United States. We owe her several particulars illustrating the apostle's charity.

He would come to the house late at night and depart before daybreak. On Sundays he took but two or three hours' rest.

On one occasion when he arrived the hostess had hardly anything to offer him. The Government agents had made a raid and a clean sweep. He accepted some candy and went away laughing.

"That's not enough for me," he said, "it's not worth while eating it." And he brought it to the sick.

He was often seen in the streets of Mexico lugging large bags of flour on his back. For the poor and the sick he was ready to face ridicule. Once he carried in his arms six live chickens and a turkey. On returning for dinner he made the funniest and most

significant gestures: the excited birds had shared their lice with him.

Another time, with six chickens he boldly boarded a 'bus, his usual presence of mind passing them off with a joke.

His noblest act of charity was no doubt the one mentioned in a letter written a month before his death (October 26.)

He often found babies abandoned by their penniless or heartless parents and carried them to the foundling hospital.

"Six thus came my way....

"On the first occasion I had no time to send any one for the baby, and had to take it myself. I was so imprudent as to put it, well wrapped up in a large shawl, in a corner of the auto. At the first jolt, the baby bounced up and had I not caught it on the fly I should have had to bring it to the cemetery. I took it up in my arms and need not tell you what a state I was in when I handed it to its adopted parents!...."

All Things to all Men

IF Father Pro had pity on the multitude and could not see the wretched without relieving them, it was not out of mere kindness; he had an end in view. He found his way into men's hearts and then sought to uplift their souls.

His inborn cheerfulness comforted Catholics beggared by a father's exile or imprisonment. By word and example he made a lasting impression and conversions without number.

God was pleased to impart His gifts to an apostle who took no glory to himself. Father Pro could not but see what good he was doing, but with great simplicity attributed all to God.

"I have seriously considered how to avoid being puffed up by my innumerable achievements: conversions are wrought by the grace of God."

His letters abound in allusions to St. Paul's *gratia Dei mecum*. He knows that what he does would be nothing without grace, so he forges ahead. He thus chronicles his apostolic work:

"I have heard confessions even in the jails where I spend most of my time, for they are crowded with Catholics. I bring the prisoners food, pillows, blankets, money, cigarettes. If the jailers only knew what sort of bird I am!

"I wish they did, for I would willingly spend a few weeks in prison. I got back at them, however, by giving retreats right and left. What splendid work!

"Being without experience in that line, I had my misgivings at first. I began with a congregation of about ninety old women. Their prayers and sighs, tears and groans made me realize that if I could play on their feelings I myself came perilously near giving way to laughter. I deemed it wiser to break with the feminine and attack the masculine sex.

DURING THE CHAUFFEURS' RETREAT

"Imagine fifty noisy chauffeurs, the *Tejan* cap and a lock of hair over the eye and spitting prodigiously. Fine types with their rough, unpolished manners. . . .

"Needless to stress the solemnity of the conferences in a spacious yard, surrounded with an iron grating. Disguised as a mechanic, my cap pulled over my forehead, I elbow my sympathetic congregation. . . .

"God bless every chauffeur in the world!"

The preacher was emboldened by his first success.

"Another retreat was to some eighty women teachers, Government officials, free and easy, garrulous and afraid of nothing, not even of the devil. This retreat did perhaps even more good than that to the chauffeurs. I would like to have seen you set upon by a pack of hounds denying the immortality of the soul, obstinately rooted in their prejudices and madly refusing to submit to the sweet yoke of Christ.

"I strained every nerve, but was more than repaid when I saw them *all* receive,

and registered a dozen remarkable conversions... remarkable, so radical was the change in those misguided souls!

"As I have no talents to boast of, I realized that conversions were due to God's grace alone. My most cogent arguments, my most fiery appeals fell flat. Then I saw the grace of God moving those hearts through some simple, unprepared sentences of mine.

"Blessed be God, my Father, Who is so good, so good!"

"Retreats under fire" were organized as follows:

A group of women invited their friends to make a retreat. The exercises were given in various houses throughout the town, a ticket being required for admittance. In the evening the preacher announced when the meeting was to be held next day.

The meeting opened with the recitation of the rosary; the Father then preached. Seated in an arm-chair, near an improvised altar, and wearing a fashionable suit, with a flower in his lapel, he spoke unpurturbed by

DURING THE WOMEN'S RETREAT

the soldiers at his heels. After the sermon, a short meditation followed by a light lunch presided over by the preacher.

The women then invited their husbands to do likewise. The meetings were held in the evening after the day's work, an admittance ticket being always exacted. One evening the congregation gathered in the sixth story of the large *Espana* Building, the men kneeling around type-writers to recite the rosary. Sermon. General Communion on closing day.

No one was afraid. Once, to quiet suspicion, Mass was said in a room opposite the Court House close to the Attorney General's offices!

Father Pro was an expert in this line of work [1].

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1. *The Monitor*, a San Francisco paper, thus reported a meeting of former retreatants (May 12, 1928):

"Father Pro was the first Jesuit martyr in Mexico and the first martyr of the retreat movement.

"The soldiers of Calles captured Father Pro while he was giving a retreat in Mexico City...

"And before his two hundred listeners, the lecturer, Michael Williams, a well known author in San Francisco, proposed to erect before their retreat house a statue of Father Pro, first martyr and an ardent promoter of retreats..."

When a retreat was over, he would rush off to something else.

"Good Friday was one uninterrupted round of work—the points of meditation to a group of professors, the Seven Words, a retreat to young men and a Passion sermon —all in different parts of the city."

He lamented his inability to do more.

"If I could only trilocate!" he exclaimed, after enumerating what remained to do.

He was in demand everywhere.

"In spite of the strict watch on the part of the secret police which has over ten thousand agents in the city, I am able to baptize, bless marriages and bring Holy Viaticum to the dying. Would that I could be in a hundred places at the same time!"

He had hard cases to deal with.

"Once," he related, "I had to listen for an hour to the vagaries of a woman theosophist. She poured forth the wildest vituperations that human lips could utter. I had never heard anything so fierce even

among the miners. And yet she was very ill. She blasphemed and cursed everything sacred: the saints, the sacraments, even the Virgin's most blessed name. I strove to convert her truly infernal tongue. At the end of six days she recited nothing but *Aves* and *Credos*. What a misfortune to lack religious training! Poor soul! Very likely she will die to-morrow as the result of an operation, but I shall bring her Holy Communion early."

He tried to give an account of his ministrations but hardly had time to note everything.

"How much I would have to tell you," he wrote to his Provincial (February 19, 1927). "Here is a summary. Before the acute period I organized 'Communion Stations' where I went every day to give Holy Communion to three or four hundred people. On the First Fridays the number almost trebled. Fancy what that meant for a poor Rector unaccustomed to hear confessions.

Sporting it on my brother's bicycle, I flew through the streets at the risk of life and limb, for our truck drivers are very careless.

"I have almost lost track of my other work, sick calls being my pet occupation. Viaticum, Extreme Unction, baptisms and marriages 'multiplied,' chiefly among, the working class, the most remarkable case being the baptism of two *little* girls of twenty-five and twenty-eight (!) who had boldly approached the Holy Table several times *before* baptism. Then there was the marriage of a couple who had been living together for twenty-five years. First Communions without number.

"Appointed Chief Lecturer by the League, I mobilized 150 young men for a lecturing campaign which at first proved a howling success. But subsequent arrests clipped our wings and brought down our elaborate organization.

"In the suburbs. . . .it seems I was in my element, talking, shouting, bellowing before

DURING THE MINERS' RETREAT

congregations in shirt sleeves. Hundreds attended my lectures, regardless of the police. Poor people! There is so much good to do among them!"

As to his health he has no time to think of it. He alludes to it here and there in his letters but always in a bantering tone.

"It is 3 o'clock. I should be in the confessional—a rather hard task these days. The Heavenly Father has given me a severe penance in the form of a toothache—so violent at times that I feel like hurling the confessional screen at the poor penitent.... But I must pay interest on all the favors granted to my large family!" (May 25, 1927).

He preferred laboring among men.

"Whatever class they belong to, high or low, I feel at home with men, only regretting my inability to give them more time. A splendid cohort of chauffeurs forms my crown of glory! How nice to be among irrepressible people who talk *loud* but are so easy to manage when treated with considerateness....

"While comparative peace prevails, we are harvesting (souls). (An allusion to the month in which the letter was written, August 5, 1927.) Always the same trouble: only 24 hours in a day! Results are as splendid as they are varied: marriages of dying Lutherans and heretics, of every age and condition; consultations *à la Nicodème*, while armed men mount guard at the door; stirring First Communions; Masses in catacomb style which impress the celebrant with his unworthiness on witnessing the faith of the congregation; daily and nightly confessions which exhaust the old man and make sin hateful (so burdensome it is for him).

"If I lived in community, I should feel the strain 90% less. I run here and there sweating, jolted in springless trucks, stealthily eying those who have an eye on us, and threatened with arrest and dungeons at every street corner. . . .

"I would almost prefer being in prison to rest a little... I am broken, more and

more broken by this barbarousness! Poor, poor people! You sacrifice the welfare of your souls to earthly advantages!

"But I will remain in harness until the Great Captain orders otherwise, because it is not by my strength, but *gratia Dei mecum* that I shall persevere unto the end."

It grieved the apostle to see people neglect their souls, but God afforded him sweet compensations.

"Two days ago (November 24, 1926), we had a beautiful ceremony: the conversion of a Protestant woman. As prescribed by Canon Law, she signed her abjuration before two witneses; but wishing to make 'offerings of more value and greater price,' she asked to abjure her errors publicly, a few moments before receiving. The ceremony was held at the Good Shepherd's in the presence of over two hundred people. The profession of faith was made before the Most Blessed Sacrament; the convert begged pardon, promised fidelity

to the teachings of the Church and commended herself to the prayers of the witnesses. . . ."

Father Pro's labors were known to his superiors, who were also aware that the police had orders to arrest him. It was deemed advisable to make him take a rest. To sit with folded arms was an annoyance which he bore uncomplaining, but what a relief when set free again!

"With what intense joy," he wrote at once, "I received permission to leave the hiding-place to which I had retired on account of the illustrious Plutarco Calles. . . .

"Of course it was necessary to take precautions.

"But I was stifling in my hiding-place!

"I heard nothing but the lamentations of my companions about the imprisonment of this one, the exile of that one, the assassination of another. . . .

"And I was caged in!. . . .

"To study was out of the question, because I had no books. I was dying to rush into the fray and spur on the combatants, hoping that I might also share their lot.

"But the dream did not materialize. . . . I had to resign myself, offering up my desires on the altar of obedience."

Gladly he returned to the perils of apostolic life. His last letter recording his occupations reveals him calm amid a swarm of spies.

He had celebrated Christ the King in 1926. On October 30, 1927, he described what had been done to enhance the celebration of the last feast of Christ the King which he was to spend on earth. The letter, written less than a month before his death, refers to events preceding the feast.

"At 5 o'clock in the morning, I opened the front door to admit some thirty women coming for confession; then a long line of children brought the congregation to 150. The hall was packed, but they waited patiently till confessions were over to hear Mass.

"Throughout the triduum it afforded me great comfort to preach after the Gospel and give general Communion, followed by an interminable series of absolutions which these good people desired me to impart to their dead, from the great-grandfathers to the future grandsons.

"Towards evening a similar service was held for men, but. . . .Massless. I don't know how so many workmen and big-wigs managed to squeeze into three little dark rooms. I estimate my audience at no less that two hundred men eager to hear the word of God. I was astounded to see such numbers in spite of prying eyes. The revolutionists were but a few steps away, threatening to shoot. This doubtless explains why the municipal authorities thought that no man could be reckless enough (as I was) to give a triduum under their very noses, with rosary and mission hymns, like under normal conditions.

"I had proposed to myself a dilemma *in barbara* to quiet my scruples.

"*Either* I shall be cast into prison during the triduum *or* I shall not.

"If I am not cast into prison, I will continue to give the triduum, thus honoring Christ the King.

"If I am, I will continue to give the triduum by my prayers and penances (the insects) equally honoring Christ the King.

"Therefore the triduum was held, to spite the devil who had to bend the knee before the only King of heaven and earth.

"I gave stylish 'lectures' here and there, beginning with a few pompous sentences and then preaching an ordinary sermon on judgment, death, sin, confession."

Among his audience were men who had associated with socialists; simple people who had been deceived by high-sounding words. They were reclaimed by the lecturer's pompous sentences.

"After a lecture," relates Father Pro, "three shoemakers said to me as they went out:

"'All that fits us perfectly,' meaning that it was just what they needed. The eminent critics admitted that my style of lecture had a great 'prestige for the constituent mentality of the nation!' While unable to grasp their idea, I shook hands with them so vigorously that for three hours my own hand was scented with blacking."

His letter closes with a reference to his health:

"Needless to say that I ignore the medical prescriptions destined to weigh upon my humanity for three years after the operation—like so many anathemas. Despite the fact that rich food is sudden death for me, I ate sausage and *pambasos* and my stomach has hitherto registered no protest. This shows that excursions which give 'prestige to the constituent mentality of the nation' can be multiplied regardless of persons and things... What do you think? Dear cousin, use your influence to have my activities extended, so that I may go farther afield

in the service of God! Remember that the 'constituent mentality of the nation' is at stake!"

However willing to labor, Father Pro was reluctant to live alone; he yearned for the cheering company of his brethren.

"When shall we have at least half an hour," he wrote, "to talk over the thousand and one incidents of my busy life?"

"I sigh for the quiet of our religious houses, for the ease with which our ordinary duties are done!....

"But here, in the midst of the whirlwind, I wonder at the special care of God, the very special graces which He gives us—His presence most intimately felt when discouragement comes to make us feel our littleness."

For the first time he uttered the word "discouragement," but without insisting.

The apostle braced himself at the thought of the ending struggle; he yearned to be with Christ in heaven.

Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo, he wrote.

"Well do I understand St. Paul thrice repeated cry!

"Well do I understand God's significant answer: *My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity.*"

On Highways and Byways

NO one more than Father Pro longed to be with Christ, but no one was more eager to battle until God's appointed hour.

He faced danger but extricated himself with consummate skill. He knew that the police had long been searching for him, and told how he foiled them for nearly a year.

"My appearance as a student disarms suspicion about my profession. Sometimes with a cane in my hand; at others with a police dog, which was given me, following at my heels; at others riding my brother's bicycle (to which I owe a bruise on the left arm and a bump on the forehead), I go about everywhere day and night, doing good....

"An order was given for my arrest, but.... it has not yet been carried out, in spite of the fact that I am not in hiding, and do what I have to do in broad daylight, and

THE PRISONER IS INFORMED THAT HE IS TO BE SHOT

electric light, since the sun does not always serve my convenience."

He went to jail several times, but always managed to escape. Once he appealed to the sympathy of the jailor. Baring his chest, he showed the fresh scars caused by the three operations. The jailor was moved and let him go.

In December 1926, six hundred balloons were released to rain down propaganda leaflets in defence of religion. Calles, furious, ordered the arrest of the culprits and Father Pro was imprisoned.

He left a detailed narrative of the incident.

"My brothers in the flesh (Humberto and Roberto) being deeply implicated in the League and promoters of the famous balloons, drew the attention of our *friends* in the Government.

"On December 4, the day they launched the balloons, Bandala came to search the house. He found nothing, but gave orders

to jail any man entering the house from noon till 7 P. M. I was the only one to enter and the only member of the family to visit the elegant palace (the prison) of Santiago Tlaltelolco!

"What recollections! At 7 P. M. we were marched to prison between two files of soldiers. There were seven of us arrested on account of the famous balloons. The lieutenant who received us at Santiago, on reading our official commitment, laughed, saying:

"'To-morrow, we shall have Mass.'

"'That looks bad,' I said to myself, they have guessed who I am.

"'Mass?' we all asked in chorus, 'Mass?

—Yes, replied the lieutenant; 'there is a priest among you.

"'That looks bad, very bad,' I thought.

"We stared at each other to see who was the unfortunate priest in our midst.

"'It is one Miguel Augustin,' added the lieutenant.

"'Listen!' I said out loud, 'I am Miguel Augustin. But it is no more likely that I shall say Mass to-morrow than that I shall sleep on a mattress to-night.

'—And this?' said he, pointing to the word: *Pro*, at the end of my name.

"'That is my family name, not the abbreviation of *presbitero*'[1].

"We spent the night in the courtyard, under the stars. The prison order: 'Let the prisoners feel no comfort!' was duly complied with.

"A large cement bed—the whole courtyard, with high pillows—the walls—was put at our disposal and we were left to guard as best we could against the cool night air.

"The seven of us huddled together, for the cold was intense. We recited the rosary, sang all the sacred and profane hymns we could think of and then dozed away, regardless of the sentries on duty.

1. Spanish priests abreviate the word *presbitero* to *pbro* after their signature.

ON THE HIGHWAYS
Three months before his death
In the background, the President's Mansion

"At sunrise, they proceeded to arouse us with a shower of cold water, but as we were not asleep, we began to run about before the jeering soldiers.

"Our purse contained three dollars and ten cents, enough to pay for a pot of boiling orange leaf tea, unsweatened. It was nectar for our numb and frozen persons.

"I left the prison at noon; my companions had the privilege of remaining till the following day. I had to present myself twice to make declarations—about what, I could never find out. The whole thing was a farce. I made fun of the Government, talking in a silly way that enabled me to be outspoken without compromising anybody.

"Now that I think of it I wonder that they did not shoot me. Before I went out they asked me:

"'Are you ready to pay such a fine? Mr. Calles is indignant about the balloons.

—No Sir,' I replied, 'and for two reasons. First, I haven't a cent; and secondly,

even if I had, I would not be guilty of contributing a cent to support the present Government.

"After this comedy my ministrations were curtailed. Yet I managed to give instructions, benediction and general Communion for Christmas in sixteen asylums and at the Good Shepherd's.

"This was my last public feat, for on the 29, a posse of reservists invaded the house with orders to arrest all my relatives. In vain I stormed, in vain I entreated, in vain I appealed to higher influences; their stony hearts softened only when I offered them fifty dollars. My father, my sister, my two brothers and I had to leave with nothing but what we had on our backs, and seek refuge among our friends and relatives with whom we have been living since then.

"This event gave rise to a host of rumors, the prevailing one being that I was the author of the 'leaflets' and that my brothers were responsible for the balloons. Both remors were false." (February 19, 1927.)

Thereafter Father Pro had to act with circumspection. He was instructed to be cautions, not to stir even, at least for the time being.

"Confined in a small room," he wrote to his Provincial, "without any outlook but the neighbor's yard and with orders to avoid being seen, I spend the day looking over papers and books, perfunctorily preparing my examination....

"Obedience is better than sacrifices, so I shall not stir.

"....Yet the faithful are in dire need of spiritual help. Every day I hear of people dying without the sacraments. Priests are no longer ready to court danger; obedience or fear keeps them in seclusion. To do my little bit, as formerly, would be to expose myself; but to do so with discretion and moderation would not be reckless....Between recklessness and fear lies a middle course; between excessive caution and boldness lies a middle course....Fears are en-

tertained for my life! But what is my life? Would it not be saving it to lose it for my brethren?

"Of course one must not expose oneself foolishly....But sons of Loyola!...." (February 19, 1927.)

Superiors sought to be prudent, but they knew that his ardent soul could not brook inactivity and Father Pro returned to the fray.

The warrant of arrest had been issued since October 1926, but he relied on his shrewdness and on Providence to elude the detectives.

Several times he came near being caught.

"Once," he related, "at 6 A. M., I was giving Holy Communion in a 'Communion Station.' Suddenly a servant rushed in crying: 'The *tecnicos!*' (the police). Women turned pale with terror.

"'Keep cool,' I said. 'Hide your veils; scatter through the rooms and don't make any noise.'

"I was wearing a cap and a grey suit.

"Taking a cigarette, I inserted it in an enormous cigarette-holder, hid the Blessed Sacrament under my coat and awaited the intruders.

"'There is public worship here' they shouted.

"'What nonsense!' I replied.

"'Yes, Sir, there is public worship here.

—You are making fun of me, Gentlemen.

—We saw a priest enter.

—You jokers, look here! Will you bet a glass of brandy that there is no priest here.

—We have orders to search. Follow us.

—What next! Follow you? What fool gave you that order? Let me see his name....Of course if you want to ramble over the house, do so, and when you find the *public worship*, let me know, so that I may go to Mass.'

"They proceeded to run through the house. To prevent further trouble, I ac-

companied them, telling them what was behind each closed door. But being in the house for the first time, I was often mistaken. I said: 'Here is a bedroom.' On opening, they found an office! 'Here is a seewing room': lo! it was a bathroom!. . . .

"Naturally no trace of the priest was found and the wily *tecnicos* set a guard at the front door.

"I took leave of them, saying that but for an appointment with a friend I would stay with them until they captured the bold priest who made sport of such watchful policemen.

"I then finished distributing Communion and returned to the *tecnicos* who were still guarding the door. Somehow or other the priest had failed to put in an appearance!

"On another occasion, as I was going to say Mass in one of the suburbs, I suddenly ran into two policemen who were guarding the very house where I was to celebrate.

" 'This time we're lost,' I said to myself. To go in was very risky. To turn back was

to desert the faithful who were awaiting me, and, to my mind, a disgrace.

"With the utmost coolness, I stopped in front of the policemen and with an air of importance wrote down the number of the house in a note-book. Then, unbuttoning my coat as if to show my police badge, I said with finality:

" 'There's a cat in the bag!'

"They gave me a military salute and let me pass, thinking that I was a police agent and had really shown them the badge which the latter usually wears under his coat.

" 'Now there *is* a cat in the bag,' I said as I ran upstairs.

"It was impossible to say Mass, however. On seeing me come in the poor people grew white with terror and wanted to hide me in a wardrobe.

" 'We could not be safer,' I said, 'the police are guarding the house for us.' But it was no use expostulating. They begged me to escape through the roof. Concealing

my cassock, I went out the way I came in, receiving two superb military salutes from the policemen."

Another amusing incident might have ended tragically.

"It was the first night of a retreat to civil servants. On leaving the house at half-past nine, I caught sight of two individuals who crossed the street and waited for me at the corner.

" 'My boy,' I said, 'good-bye to your life!'

"But relying on the proverb: he who strikes first strikes twice, I went up to them and asked for a match.

" 'You can get one in the shop,' was the answer.

"I moved off; they followed me. Was it a mere coincidence? I turned this way and that; they did the same.

" 'This time you are a goner,' I said to myself.

"I took an auto; so did they. Fortunately the driver was a Catholic who seeing my plight put himself at my service.

" 'Look, my lad, at the corner that I point out, slow down a bit, I'll jump out, and you go right on.'

"Putting my cap in my pocket, I unbuttoned my black coat to show my white shirt and. . . . jumped. "A few rapid strides brought me to a tree against which I leaned in such a way as to be in full view. The two men passed a second later, almost grazing me with the mud-guards of their car. They certainly saw me, but it did not occur to them in the least that I was the very one they were after.

"I wheeled round, still dazed by the shock received on alighting. 'Steady, my boy, now we're ready for another.' And with a limp I hurried to cover."

Sometimes he made sport of those who were commissioned to arrest him. Two detectives once accosted him, thinking they

had bagged their game. Father Pro greeted them so affably and entertained them so graciously that they began to have doubts. . . . To reassure them completely, he brought them to one of the popular cafés, ordered a light lunch and drank to their health.

It sometimes required no small presence of mind to find a way out.

Another time two policemen were at his heels. He realized that they would soon catch up to him. On turning a corner he saw a Catholic lady whom he knew. A wink and she understood. They began to walk slowly side by side, like two lovers. . . .

Ten seconds after, the sleuths arrived. Look where they would, there was no Father Pro! Only two lovers pacing in tender converse. . . .

All this occurred at the end of 1926. Father Pro extricated himself so successfully from every danger that he apprehended never being caught!

On entering a prison to visit the inmates, he said:

"If the jailers only knew who I am, they would have caged me long ago. The other day, I felt like shouting to the officials in search of me:

"'Mr. Mayor, I am the promoter of the religious lectures: I am the man who trains young men to speak; I am the man who hears confessions under your nose. Are you too stupid to arrest me for at least two weeks?'....

"But the dream was not to come true....

"God only knows what an honor I would deem it to eat the loathsome prison food and spend long days and longer nights cramped in a narrow cell....

"O my friends, pray that my fondest dream may materialize!

"I promised the most gloomy saints in paradise to dance a *jarabe tapatio* (a comic Mexican dance) if the warrant for my arrest ever finds me...."

This letter was written on November 13, 1926. The warrant was to seek him for over a year.

Meanwhile he was not in hiding. He conducted all propaganda work and continued to spread leaflets in defence of religion. Little bills printed in the form of stamps were stuck everywhere, even on Calles' auto.

Father Pro once did a little propaganda in a tramway. He got on, sat down and, unobserved, stuck a set of bills on his back. Then, like the innocent victim of a practical joke, he rose and demurely walked up and down, to let every one have a good look at the stamps....

In the spring of 1927, Calles ordered Father Pro's arrest at any cost.

"The illustrious members of the Government," wrote our hero to a friend, "are enraged because the League issued Bonds to stimulate public charity. The proceeds of the Bonds will serve....many purposes. As the Bonds have already given, and still

continue to give, excellent results, they (those gentlemen) are in despair. (They will collar me if this harmless letter falls into their hands)." (May 25, 1927.)

He had to be ever on the alert. Houses were searched with increasing frequency, even the one in which the Pro family lived.

"Here," he added, "things are going swimmingly—Christians are despatched to Heaven for the slightest thing. The happy man cast into the underground dungeon is sure never again to sit at his own table. This conviction is so deep-rooted, that when one of us crosses the threshold of the house, my relatives, instead of saying 'Au revoir,' make an act of contrition.

"We know that any one not in by 11 P. M. is sure to stand before a firing squad. We have had a last family gathering and taken leave of one another till the valley of Josaphat.

"We make no will. Our two remaining straw mats and some poultry have been spirited away.

"But instead of lamenting, we have uncontrollable fits of laughter. What good luck to go to Heaven for so noble a cause!

"What would I not give for you to come and spend a day with us! We live here without receiving any visits, with the bare necessaries. For the seven of us there are five chairs, four plates, four knives, eight beds, three mattresses and a broom. Everything is lent, that is given, for it is practically certain that neither we nor our heirs shall return anything.

As a result of the three recent raids not even a spittoon is left....But as that article is not necessary to go to Heaven, we gave it up on easy terms.

"Books!....Here I must sing a *Requiem*. Into what robber's hands your *Pesch* has fallen I don't know, but I solemnly promise to return it in Heaven where robbers have not the ghost of a chance....

"I have broken no lances with the police of late, save once with a reservist who swore

THE MARTYR'S LAST PRAYER

by the fifteen peers of France that I should go to jail, and I almost swore by the beard of Mohammed that I would not go.

"He was so provoking that I felt like punching him, and ended by saying:

"'Listen, you bore, if you bring me to jail, I shall be unable to hear your mamma's confession....

—Pardon, Father, you see what times we are living in. Quit this place as quickly as possible!

—Quit? You quit and without even completing your search. Go and tell your mother that I shall be at her house to-night to hear her confession, and to-morrow I shall bring her Communion. Let us hope that we shall soon hear *your* confession....'

"The following day, my friend was at his mother's Communion. I hope soon to bring him the same blessing...." (May 25, 1927, Vigil of the Ascension.)

Thus Father Pro lost no opportunity of winning souls. For them he lived; for them he was soon to die.

"Where I learnt to love souls . . . ."

LOVE of souls was the characteristic note of Father Pro's spiritual life. On the day of his ordination he asked Our Lord to be useful to souls. "But to do them good," said he, "one must love them passionately . . . ." That love grew daily in his soul and was soon to flower into the greatest proof of love—the sacrifice of one's life for the beloved.

While awaiting the signal for the supreme offering, he could not conceal the burning fire in his apostolic heart nor its outburts in familiar conversation:

"I am ready to give my life to lead souls to God!" he often repeated.

For them he ever sighed . . . . To them he devoted every moment of his sacerdotal life.

How gently he dealt with generous souls confiding in him! The apostle "whom drunk-

ards hobnobbed with, whom vendors winked at, whom the flower and cream of rascality took to their hearts" met many a chosen soul often bearing heavy crosses. He treated them with a mother's tenderness for a sickly child. A shrewd guide, he made no cast-iron rules nor did he impose his own will. He studied each individual soul and gently stimulated the work of grace.

"God alone," said he, "God alone is the Master of souls."

He would question in order to see his way, but at the first sign of hesitation or uneasiness he would desist. Thenceforth he would speak of the matter only with God, His Father, Whom he ceased not to pray for "his sisters."

One night he came in very late, without having recited his breviary. He was exhausted after long hours in the confessional. Suddenly the thought of a suffering "sister" came to his mind; he knelt down and said his office, offering his fatigue for her.

His was a selfless love. If some mark of affection was shown him, he would brush it aside. "I am ready," said he, "to give my life for souls, but want nothing for myself. The one thing I want is to lead them to God. If I kept anything for myself, I should be a robber and a wretch; I should no longer be a priest."

He once disclosed the secret of his love. Holding a picture of the Heart of Jesus, he exclaimed:

"The Cross! the Cross! the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ! It tells us of love; ardent, constant love; folly of love. Let us study this precious book: our hearts will find an object worthy of them and our love will expand. When our souls approach the Heart of Jesus, their love can neither fail nor fade; it grows purer and more divine, overflowing into those we love, pure, disinterested, deep as the love of God which kindles and quickens our own. When a heart has once drawn its sap from the wood of the Cross, it can

no longer turn away. I know this by experience. . . ."

He insisted on purity of intention in an apostle's love. To an intimate associate he wrote:

"In the open side of Jesus appears His Heart burning with love for you, for me, for all men. . . .But it is encircled with thorns, and in the centre rises the Cross. The sacred fire must also kindle our own poor hearts, to spread it to others—but hedged in with thorns, to guard us against petty self-interest —but with the Cross on high, the Cross with outstretched arms to embrace all around us, without confining our zeal to any one in particular."

"Do you know," said he another time, "where I gained the little experience I have? Do you know where I learnt to love? In the Heart of Jesus."

Shortly before his death, he again referred to the source which fed his zeal:

"If life daily becomes harder and more burdensome, a thousand times blessed be

He Who wills it so! If life becomes harder, love also grows stronger, and love founded on pain can alone bear the Cross which my Lord Jesus bore—a selfless love thirsting to love and suffer for all around us, an ardent love uplifting the soul by purifying it, a love undaunted by failure or contempt."

He ended with a prayer—a splendid commentary on the words spoken to Our Lord by a father in distress: "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

"Heart of Jesus, I love Thee, but increase my love; Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee, but strengthen my hope; Heart of Jesus, I give Thee my heart, but sink it so deeply in Thine that it will never break away; Heart of Jesus, I am all Thine, but keep my promise that I may redeem it unto the utter sacrifice of my life."

How wonderful that a life so full of distractions should, like Xavier's, be spent quite close to Our Lord!

To those who marvelled at his facility in treating of, and especially in performing, supernatural things, he revealed the secret of his heart:

"Oh! it is very simple: I endeavor to do all my actions in the presence of God, my Father."

When momentarily released from the care of souls, he naturally turned to prayer. His attitude was then more eloquent than any sermon.

"Had I harbored any doubts on the Real Presence," said a penitent who often saw him pray before the Blessed Sacrament, "my doubts would have vanished forthwith."

*
* *

Where I learnt to love souls....

It was also in the heart of the Virgin Mary. Little has been said of Father Pro's great devotion to his heavenly Mother. This other source of his love for souls may be noted here.

Witnesses of his apostolic life remember a few burning words of his uttered in familiar conversation.

Speaking one day of temptations against purity, he said:

"Nothing is so noble as the terrible struggle known to God alone and to the soul; nothing is so purifying for the soul. . . . I do not dread it: the Blessed Virgin is so kind to me, so motherly!"

During May 1927, he urged his congregation to celebrate the month of Mary as well as possible recalling his own experiences:

"The Blessed Virgin permits me to offer her a gift during this month and it is my custom to do so. I try to present her with something nice. . . . Oh! I do not trouble looking about for anything. I pray to her and she herself, with a mother's love, puts the gift into my hands."

His "extraordinary" love for Mary, as a penitent calls it, sometimes waxed enthusiastic.

A few intimate letters to a Spanish Father disclose his inmost feelings.

The obliging friend had procured the necessary alms for him to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes before sailing for Mexico. In return, Father Pro gave his benefactor an account of the journey.

He writes a facetious letter, pretending to be angry with his friend whom he charges with harshness. "What! oblige a poor sickly Mexican to travel a whole night in a train! Father Pro will wreak vengeance on you at the feet of the Virgin of Lourdes."

"You will repay me," said he. "I will accuse you of abusing an innocent Mexican, and demand confinement in a cell whence you cannot escape. Here is what I shall say to Our Lady of Lourdes:

"Good Mother, thou knowest that man N., and my love for him despite his wiles. I earnestly beseech thee to set him deep in the Heart of thy Son, a prison ever aflame

and surrounded with thorns where he will be safe....Confine him in the open Side of Jesus, now especially that he is soon to become a priest...."

Father Pro was naturally cheerful. His letters were generally written in a bantering tone, even when dealing with serious matters.

This time, however, he was so deeply moved that his letters reflected unwonted gravity:

"What one feels here," he wrote from Lourdes to a friend in Spain, "is too deep for words. This day was one of the happiest in my life and I owe it to you....I said Mass at 9 o'clock. I spent an hour before the grotto where I wept like a child. Thanks, thanks....May the Lord repay and bless you!" (June 7, 1926.)

These few lines hastily scribbled on a card, were the outline, as it were, of the long letter which he wrote from Paris on the following day.

My Dear Father in Jesus Christ,

Now I can truly say with Simeon: Nunc dimittis! *I can set out for* another world, *not the one which our ancestors called the Indies, but the real other world—Heaven.*

Weak and unfit as I am, I may have made a mess of it; I may have been unwise in spending two nights in a train without sleep or food, but I will always maintain that yesterday was one of the happiest days in my life.

Reaching Lourdes at 8.45 A. M., I at once experienced our Mother's tender care. I met the Bishop's secretary in the street and presented my papers. He gave me leave to celebrate Holy Mass. The last Mass was ending at the main altar in the Basilica. I began mine at 9; it lasted longer than usual, the memento *containing a long list of families for whom I had to pray....*

I then went to the grotto—a vista of Heaven where I beheld the Virgin who flooded my soul with boundless joy, intense consolation,

Divine bliss. All was deeply but unutterably felt. Poor, unlucky Pro saw nothing, heard nothing, was unaware of what thousands of pilgrims were doing around him. Once, however, on looking up to contemplate my good Mother, I espied a sick woman lying in a carriage; she was reciting the rosary with outstretched arms. I was stirred to the depths by such faith and confidence. My heart was aflame and I spoke tender words to our most holy Mother, who, without any cooperation on my part, made me experience raptures hitherto unknown. How could I remain so long kneeling, I who am usually exhausting after being five minutes on my knees? I do not know. Do not ask me what I did or said; I do not know. Yesterday I was no longer my wretched self.

A priest approached and said: "If you persist in remaining here, you will drop with fatigue; I would advise you to go to the spring where it is shady." Why did he say that? What appearance did I present? Once more I do

not know. I only know that I was at my Mother's feet and had a keen sense of her presence and action. Near the spring, I saw hundreds of poor invalids in quest of health. A Capuchin preached after each decade of the rosary. I did like the others; I sang, prayed, kissed the ground. With outstretched arms I invoked the Blessed Virgin. . . . At 4. 50 P. M., I left by train.

So I have been to Lourdes. . . . I did not visit the Calvary; I did not see the Gave; I could not describe the shape of the Basilica nor what it contains. Yet I truly went to Lourdes. For me, going to Lourdes meant meeting my heavenly Mother, speaking to her, praying to her. I met her, spoke to her, prayed to her.

The crossing will not be so hard as I had thought; the Blessed Virgin told me so.

Oh! Father N., my wretched nature found it very painful to return to Mexico—no health, incompleted studies—to see my poor country ruined by this government—not to see my sainted mother to whom I owe my life, and whose death

I still lament despite my resignation and conformity with the will of God. But the Virgin of Lourdes has granted me courage!

Father Pro's heroism in the face of death was not a sudden inspiration. It had long been welling from well known sources: intimacy with Christ and tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. By such means God works wonders in a willing soul. Father Pro had given up self. To what heights soared his love for God and souls is revealed in this prayer to the Blessed Virgin:

Let me spend my life near thee, O Mother, to keep thee company in thy solitude and deepest grief; let me feel in my soul the sadness of thine eyes and the abandonment of thy heart.

On life's highway I do not seek the gladness of Bethlehem; I do not wish to adore the Infant God in thy virginal hands, nor to enjoy the winsome presence of Jesus in thy humble home of Nazareth, nor to mingle with the angelic choirs in thy glorious Assumption.

My wish in life is for the jeers and derision of Calvary; for the slow agony of thy Son, the contempt, the disgrace and infamy of the Cross. My wish, O most sorrowful Virgin, is to stand near thee, to strengthen my soul through thy tears, to complete my offering through thy martyrdom, to temper my heart through thy solitude and to love my God and thy God through my self-sacrifice.

Facing the bullets of Calles

FATHER PRO longed to die a martyr's death. He said that he would die, for only through the blood of many priests could Mexico be saved....

One morning in November, he asked the nuns of a convent where he was saying Mass to pray that God would graciously take his life for the salvation of his country. After Mass he said to the Superioress: "I feel that my offering has been accepted."

Father Pro eagerly awaited God's appointed hour.

Calles was seeking an opportunity to further his designs. He found a suitable one, he thought, in an attempt against General Obregon, on November 13. The General, within a few hours of his return to the Capital, was on his way to a bull race when a car brushed against his. It contained four armed young men. One of them hurled

a bomb at Obregon while the others opened fire. The officers of the General's escort returned fire, wounding one of the assailants. The names of the latter have since been disclosed, and it is absolutely certain that Father Pro and his brother Humberto were not there, nor were they even privy to the plot against Obregon.

Besides, for three days there was no question of fixing the responsibility on Father Pro. But in the evening of November 17, Mrs. J. Montes de Oca was suddenly arrested and sent to prison. Certain explanations given in an attempt to save her, revealed, wilfully or not, the hiding place of the Pro brothers.

Calles' agents were jubilant at the prospect of apprehending at last the man who had eluded them for over a year. That same night it was determined to arrest him; Basail and a few soldiers were to carry out the order at daybreak.

Miguel and his brothers suspected nothing as they had changed quarters a few days

before. At 4 A. M., the door of their room opened suddenly: Basail and his men covered them with their revolvers:

"Don't stir!" they shouted.

Humberto, realizing the gravity of the situation, said to his brother the priest:

"Will you hear my confession?

—Not allowed," said Basail.

"I will hear him all the same," replied Miguel.

Leading his brother to the farther end of the room, he absolved him.

Roberto was also taken into custody. Meanwhile the soldiers were growing restless, apprehending resistance.

They had been told off by one Cruz, a "General", albeit he had never faced an armed foe. A friend and tool of Calles, he alone knew the President's plans; he alone, in Miguel's case, was to act as witness, prosecutor, judge and executioner.

The soldiers sent to capture the Pro brothers returned to the prison at an early

hour. Cruz was still asleep. While awaiting the judge the three prisoners complied with the usual formalities. An attempt was made to incriminate them by suddenly confronting them with Obregon's bomb-shattered car.

"That's your work," they were told.

"That's news for us," calmly replied Humberto.

Cruz was in no hurry to give instructions. After vainly waiting for four hours the prisoners were led to their cells. Humberto was confined with Mrs. Montes de Oca, arrested the day before. Roberto and Miguel shared the same room.

For three days there was no mention of the arrest.

On November 23, Cruz gave out the first news regarding the prisoners. He declared the members of the League for the Defence of Religious Liberty responsible for the Obregon outrage, alleging that a house rented by Humberto and Mrs. Montes de Oca for Catholic meetings, contained a bomb-

making plant. He added that the assassins' car had been parked in the yard for several days.

On the 22, at 2 P. M., Cruz repaired to the prison, escorted by a few journalists. To the reporter of *Excelsior* Father Pro said quite plainly:

"I am grateful to my captors for their attentions, but I had absolutely nothing to do with this affair (the Obregon outrage). I am a friend of law and order, my conscience is at ease, and I trust that justice will be done. I flatly deny having taken any part in the plot."

Obregon was in doubts as to the real authors of the attempt upon his life. He suspected the partisans of Gomez and Serrano; then it occurred to him that it might have been engineered by Calles himself with the assistance of Morones. To remove all doubts and ascertain whether or not the Pro brothers were guilty of the crime, he ordered an investigation. He sent his lawyer,

Arturo Orci, who was in Obregon's car on November 13, to see General Cruz and demand a trial. The prisoners were under the exclusive control of the Inspector-General of Police.

Orci accordingly went to Cruz' office. The latter was away, but his secretary, Benito Guerra Leal, received the lawyer who communicated Obregon's demand for an immediate trial. Orci then asked to see the official report of the prisoners' arrest.

Leal handed him a paper.

Orci read it carefully and said:

"There is no mention of a charge here. This is merely your police report.

—It is all we have," replied the secretary.

"What does the Chief of Police think of the prisoners' guilt ?" inquired Orci.

Stressing every syllable to show that he meant what he said, Leal replied:

"The Pro brothers did not admit any complicity in the plot and no complicity has ever been proven."

He promised Orci that a public trial would be held on the following day, as General Obregon demanded.

What did the prisoners do during their six days of captivity ?

Their cells opened on a central hall. That of Miguel was opposite those of Humberto and Mrs. Montes de Oca. He could communicate only by signs, but from behind his prison bars he still managed to preach, pointing to heaven which awaited them. He thanked his benefactress, assuring her that up there he would soon repay what she had done for him during the last months. He gave absolution at a distance to the other Catholic prisoners in the hall.

November 20 fell on a Sunday. They got up a little celebration with prayers and pious reading and ended by singing in chorus "St. Ignatius' March." Father Pro frequently recited the rosary out loud and at night prayers were said in common.

Every day the prisoners were called upon to make declarations. On the 22, the day before the execution, a photographer was admitted into the hall to photograph the condemned men for the papers of the 23. The prisoners did not object. So convinced were they of their innocence that they expected to be released if only the promised trial came off.

On the 23, Cruz announced in the morning papers that, upon information received, the prisoners were to be tried.

Suddenly, towards eight o'clock, a great commotion was observed near the prison. Troops lined up. Photographers and reporters, duly notified, appeared on the scene. The streets filled with wondering crowds.

Meanwhile another scene was enacted in the prison. Officers came up to Father Pro and called: "Miguel Pro."

The prisoner was accustomed to be summoned for all kinds of declarations. He left his cell at once, without his coat, and was

FACING THE BULLETS OF CALLES

sent back for it. Roberto, while helping him to put it on, felt his hand grasped by the doomed man and realized that it was his farewell.

On the way, a guard asked Father Pro to forgive him:

"I not only forgive you," said he, "but will pray for you. I thank you for the great favor you are doing me to-day."

He walked out with a firm step, unmoved.

A trustworthy correspondent wrote from Mexico City on December 4, that a priest whom he named stood on the path of the condemned men. It is surmised that Cruz released him in order that he might witness the fate of the "rebels" who may thus have received absolution.

Father Pro stood at the place indicated, facing the squad. Major Torres asked him to make known his last wish:

"Permit me to pray," he replied.

He knelt down, slowly made the sign of the Cross, joined his hands, no doubt offered

up to God the sacrifice of his life and fervently kissed the little crucifix which he held in his hand.

Then he rose, refused to be blindfolded, and turning towards the representatives of the Government and the soldiers astonished at such self-possession:

"I call God to witness," he declared, "that I am innocent of the crime laid to my charge."

With his crucifix he made the sign of the Cross over the people, saying:

"May God have mercy on you all!"

Then, with his rosary twined round his left hand, he extended his arms in the form of a cross, and calmly said:

"I forgive my enemies from the depths of my heart."

When the other Mexican martyrs died they shouted their favorite cry: *Viva Christo Rey!* (Long live Christ the King!)

Before uttering these words Father Pro was seen to pause. He raised his eyes heaven-

wards and slowly, in a low, distinct voice, like the priest at the consecration, he repeated the watchword of Pius XI to the Christian world:

"Long live Christ the King!"

He made a sign to the soldiers that he was ready. The officer gave the command: "Fire!" Miguel Pro fell with arms still extended. A sergeant stepped up and put a bullet through his head.

It was 10.30 A. M.

Humberto appeared five minutes after, not knowing that he was going to die. At sight of his brother's body, he felt a shock but recovered at once. On his way to the spot pointed out to him, he touched the lifeless form with his foot as if to draw strength from the martyr.

Roberto expected to follow them in death as he had followed them in their apostolic life. From his prison window which looked out on the execution yard he witnessed the tragedy. He saw Miguel extend his arms

DURING THE EXECUTION, GENERAL CRUZ (in the centre) QUIETLY SMOKES A CIGAR. BASAIL IS THE LAST ON THE RIGHT

and heard the reports. He saw Velchis fall, the valiant member of the A. C. J. M., then his brother Humberto and the young workman Tirado. But he was to remain on duty. Providence would not let his aged father be exiled to Cuba without support.

The bodies were forthwith transferred to the military hospital. The Pros' relatives were not present at the execution. The news reached them only towards 11 o'clock.

Ana Maria had forebodings. At 9 o'clock she went to General Cruz' office, asking to see her brothers but she was refused admittance. While anxiously waiting she heard that they had been shot.

An autopsy was hurriedly performed in one of the hospital wards: five bullets had lodged in the breasts of the martyrs. Ana Maria was allowed to see the bodies after they were laid in their coffins.

While kneeling beside them in tears she heard her father's voice:

"Where are my sons ? I wish to see them!"

Removing the lid of the priest's coffin, he silently kissed his child and with his handkerchief wiped the blood on the martyr's forehead. Then coming to Humberto he also kissed his forehead.

Ana Maria threw herself into her father's arms, sobbing. The latter gently extricating himself said firmly:

"My daughter, you have no reason to cry!"

They went home with the remains of the martyrs.

The news soon spread throughout the city. No one believed in the guilt of the Pro brothers, not even Cruz and Obregon. Orci, the General's lawyer, had seen the assailants too closely on the day of the attempt to be mistaken when the prisoners marched past. He declared that the Pro brothers were certainly not the men whom he had seen in the auto from which the bomb was thrown.

But Cruz held a priest long noted for his zeal, a champion of the A. C. J. M. and

THE FATHER PRAYING NEAR THE REMAINS OF HIS SONS

Ana Maria between the two coffins

an ardent promoter of the League for the Defence of Religious Liberty. His death sentence was already passed.

To justify himself in the eyes of the public, Cruz charged the Pro brothers with having participated in the attempt against Obregon. But he soon discarded this pretext of his own invention. The *Excelsior* of November 23 merely referred to it, stating the real motive for Father Pro's death:

"We have been informed at police headquarters that the priest Miguel Augustin Pro Juarez, accused of being one of the authors of the attempt (against Obregon), had long been sought for by the police. Three times he came near being captured, but escaped thanks to his ingenuity and was no longer heard of."

Father Pro had presumably not been hunted for so long on account of a plot hatched several months after! Besides, the Inspector-General of Police no longer concealed his real motives.

"Our fruitless attempts," stated *El Universal* of November 23, "to arrest Father Pro occurred at a time when Catholic propaganda was at its height. We sought to capture him *because he was one of the most zealous propagandists.*"

The matter was soon cleared up. It transpired that in the evening of November 22 Calles had resolved to put Father Pro to death. He sent for General Cruz and ordered him to execute at once the four prisoners taken six days before. Cruz suggested that it might be better to save legal appearances:

"I don't want formalities," retorted Calles, "I want the thing done!"

Obregon's lawyer had endeavored, as we have seen, to secure a regular trial which was promised for the following day. It was not long ere the papers informed him of the result of the proposed investigation.

"What was my surprise," he wrote, "on hearing that the prisoners had been shot at

11 A. M.! I instantly telephoned to General Cruz to ask what had happened. Recalling my visit the day before, I remarked that the investigation into the prisoners' guilt was far from complete and that General Obregon had distinctly demanded such an investigation."

"True, Sir," replied Cruz, "but even before your visit to my office, and notwithstanding General Obregon's recommendations, I had a positive order to do what I did."

Calles' friend, Basail, who was privy to the real motives for Father Pro's arrest, said to Mrs. Montes de Oca, on entering the prison in the evening of November 23:

"If the poor Father is dead, it is on account of the League (for the Defence of Religious Liberty)."

The truth is that President Calles executed Father Pro because the latter thwarted his designs against the Church. The man who thought himself all powerful and stood as the personal foe of Christ, was

exasperated at being checkmated by the personal friend of Christ. He wished to get rid of him. His agents had hounded him for a whole year. When they caught him, he had him shot without a trial, contrary to the laws of the Republic.

Calles was unconsciously the instrument of God. On him falls the shame of being an executioner. He expected to destroy the work of Christ by suppressing His apostle. Instead, he gave the signal for a splendid triumph which God reserved for His servant.

The Martyrs' Triumph

THE triumph of the martyrs began at once after their death.

From 5 to 11 P. M., and, on the following day, from 6 A. M. to 3 P. M., an endless procession moved towards the house where the bodies reposed, strewn with flowers. Thousands came to pray; many touched articles of devotion to the coffins.

"My child," said a mother leading her ten-year old boy by the hand, "look at the martyrs. I brought you here to impress this scene on your mind. When you are a man you will know how to give your life for Christ. You will know how to die as they did, blamelessly and fearlessly."

A poor woman with a young child in her arms took one of the white roses on Miguel's coffin, touched it to the face of the martyr and then passed it over that of her child.

Before leaving, she bade him kiss the sainted remains as a relic.

The visitors witnessed many touching scenes. Father and daughter set a splendid example of Christian fortitude. They could not tear themselves from the mortuary chapel. Their tears flowed but their countenances shone with pride.

The father remained kneeling near his two sons. To friends who sorrowingly tendered sympathy, he replied:

"Miguel was an apostle; Humberto was an angel all through life. They died for God; with Him they already rejoice in Heaven!"

At nightfall the doors of the house closed to strangers.

Cruz had promised that Roberto would come during the night to bid his brothers farewell. The promise was not kept. A priest had secretly brought a consecrated Host in a reliquary for the prisoner to communicate. The Host rested all night on the martyr's coffin as on an altar.

How reminiscent of the primitive Christians praying in the catacombs near the tombs on which was offered up the Victim of Calvary!

The mourners received at a Mass celebrated towards 4 A. M.

At 6 o'clock the streets were thronged. The doors opened and an unbroken line of visitors filed through till 3 P. M.

At the appointed hour an immense gathering was waiting at the door. As the coffins, borne by priests, crossed the threshold, an acclamation thundered forth:

"Long life Christ the King!"

The people in their own way were about to pass sentence on the victims of Calles.

From the balconies flowers rained on the bodies as they passed. At street corners and everywhere people fell on their knees like on the feast of Corpus Christi. Over five hundred autos escorted the richly draped hearse. Thousands spontaneously fell into

THE MARTYRS' TRIUMPH

In the centre, the hearse bearing the remains of the Pro Brothers

line. The rosary was recited. People shouted:

"Long live the holy martyrs! Long live the Pope! Long live our Bishops and priests!"

The following letter written the night of the funeral by a young Mexican to a friend in New York will no doubt prove interesting.

"I assure you that it was a demonstration of unmistakable indignation. From the time the bodies were returned to the families, an uninterrupted procession passed by them. All were in tears, praying and touching rosaries, crucifixes and medals to the remains....

"At 3 P. M. the bodies were borne through the crowded streets. From a window some one attempted to quiet the people asking them not to shout, but to no avail. From the depths of our hearts burst forth acclamations:

"Long live the martyrs! Long live the Mexican clergy! Long live the Catholic

religion! We hope more than ever that religion will live and triumph!"

"The great procession marched past with wild enthusiasm. All classes were represented.

"My friends and I decided to go on foot. There must have been six thousand people besides those in autos. Traffic was suspended, you may be sure. . . .

"We went along, praying almost aloud, much to the astonishment of the bystanders.

"We reached Dolores Hill dead beat, after marching five miles. Every one sought to approach the coffins borne on the shoulders of young men. The guards lined up to open a way for the sacred remains.

"At Dolores stood a vast multitude. Impossible to describe the popular wave of enthusiasm and indignation. As at the start of the procession, cheers broke out re-echoed by our acclamations. Cries arose against the Government and the tyrants were bitterly denounced. At the solemn

moment of the burial deep silence prevailed. We durst not speak owing to the presence of the police.

"Intense sadness came over us, but on our return through the vast, mournful cemetery gardens, resounded the hymn to Christ the King. Night was already falling.

"I never saw anything like these funerals of the martyrs, the funerals of those who taught us in life to fight unto death!

"God only knows how many more funerals we shall attend. God only knows whether the next will not be our own!. . . .

"But if it be for His cause, I willingly offer up my life."

Father Pro's body was laid in the Jesuits' vault. The prayers of the Church were recited amid profound silence. Suddenly —a particular omitted by the young correspondent—the voice of an unknown man rang out:

"Long live the first Jesuit martyr of Christ the King!"

This was the signal for further cheering.

The Pro family then came to Humberto's coffin. The father himself threw the first shovelfuls of earth on the beloved remains. Returning to his group with firm step, he said these sublime words:

"We have finished....*Te Deum laudamus!*"

And the priests took up the triumphal strain.

The throng dispersed towards the city, while the hills still re-echoed songs and prayers.

From the windows of his castle, President Calles could see the heroic Christians march past singing the triumphal hymn to Christ the King.

Thus, nineteen centuries ago, did the first Christians pass before Nero after witnessing the death of their brethren.

One of the little bills in the form of stamps spread broadcast by the League for the Defence of Religious Liberty, read:

"Calles! Christ has overcome worse men than you!"

Father Pro's blood will be the seed of heroes and He who has such champions will win the final victory:

Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat! Amen!

APPENDIX

"When I am in Heaven . . . ."

"PREPARE to send me your petitions when I am in heaven!" wrote Father Pro to his friends in a letter expressing his wish to die for the Church.

Petitions from his friends did not tarry, nor did his answers. Less than three months after his death, the Fathers appointed to collect reports of favors granted through his intercession, wrote:

"Marvellous cures and favors multiply every day. Reports come not only from Mexico City, but also from Guadalajara, Puebla, El Paso and many other towns. We may say that, like St. Teresa, Father Pro showers roses on earth."

The first favor granted by him was no doubt to one of his penitents. The latter who was living in Mexico City, found her-

self during November 1927 in great financial stress. She brought some of her accounts to the Father, who promised to look over them and advise her. But on November 18, he was arrested and cast into prison. The first news to reach his penitent was through the papers of November 23 announcing the execution. Aghast, she rushed to her lawyer and told him her distress: Father Pro had just been executed. The lawyer would not believe it.

"It is impossible," he explained, "hardly ten minutes ago Father Pro himself came here to return all your papers."

The apparition was reported by a priest of Mexico City. Such facts are no doubt harder to establish than bodily cures. But Father Pro's plan, I think, is to emulate the Little Flower who not only showers roses from heaven but is also willing to come down on earth to comfort her devotees.

Father Pro excelled in uplifting souls. He was also famous for his zeal in relieving

the sick and the poor. It seems as if he wished to continue from on high his mission upon earth.

The day after his death, from the earliest hours, a procession of devout visitors passed before the remains of the martyred brothers. An old woman of the poorer class, blind for over six years, was anxious to go but could not leave the house where she lived with Don Valladares, at X, a little town near Mexico City. The talk was all about the martyrs' death and the immense crowds surging to venerate their remains. Valladares advised the blind woman to implore Father Pro to restore her eyesight. Hardly had she uttered a prayer when she joyfully grasped the hand of Valladares, thanking him for his advice. The latter, surprised, asked if she could see.

"Yes," she replied.

Valladares wanted a proof.

"Do you know how to read ?" he inquired.

"I did formerly," she said and taking a paper from his hand, she proceeded to read out loud without the slightest difficulty.

Deeply moved, a priest at once set out for Mexico City and standing by the coffins of the glorious martyrs, he informed the family of the signal favor granted through Father Pro's intercession.

In November 1925 a Poor Clare fell from a height of fifteen feet on a staircase while washing the banister. She remained several hours unconscious. A diagnosis revealed the displacement of several ribs and of the biliary vesicle, and a fractured spine. For three years she was a prey to excruciating pain.

On January 25, 1928, a relic of Father Pro was brought to the invalid who was urged to ask the martyr to obtain her cure. On applying the relic, the pain subsided; it ceased completely on the following day. Soon after, she rose without difficulty, dressed unaided, without the slightest discomfort, walk-

ed about, went upstairs and resumed community life like a nun in perfect health.

The case of Joaquina Delgado y Riestra, already published, may thus be summarized:

The young girl had a cancer in the breast. The doctor who examined her pronounced an operation necessary. Two specialists declared that it was the only way to check the disease.

The patient who refused to be operated on began a novena to Father Pro and confidently applied a relic of the martyr. She soon felt great relief and returned to the doctor whom she had first consulted. The latter found her completely cured.

We may be permitted to insist on this case. We are in possession of documents proving that Joaquina Delgado's cure is inexplicable without Divine intervention [1].

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1. The name of the first doctor consulted by the patient was Luis G. Vasquez who signed with his own hand the testimonial from which we reproduce the following lines verbatim:

"On July 17 of last year (1927), Miss Joaquina Delgado y Riestra came to consult me, requesting me to examine a breast in which she thought there was a tumor. I found hard, sore ganglions in the left breast. I told the patient that such tumors were generally serious and advised the removal of the breast to prevent the disease from spreading. She refused to undergo an operation...

Other less striking favors are granted through Father Pro's intercession. Reports like the following reach El Paso every day:

"Miss S. B. informs Father M. that she obtained a great grace through Father Pro's intercession. A child suffering from a tumor in the neck was to undergo an operation. We made a triduum of prayers commend-

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"As she was urgent that I point out some other remedy, I proposed her going to Dr. Peter to be treated with X rays. Two months after, she came back to me. I was horrified to see that the ganglions had greatly developed while the patient complained of pains in her left lung. It was no longer a question of losing time deliberating but of proceeding to operate.

"I gave the patient a card for Dr. Rafael Raygadas Vértiz... She did not go to him but to Doctors Gutiérrez and Eguilez. One of them said after examining her: "No other remedy but an operation. People no longer believe in miracles and, besides, none are performed in the XXth century."

"At the beginning of December, the Superior of the Teresian Convent of Mexicoac informed me that the patient had finally decided to undergo an operation. I requested the nun kindly to tell her not to come to me. I did not wish to perform the operation myself as I was not anxious to expose myself to certain failure...

"Three days after, Miss Delgado came to ask me to examine her... I was surprised to see how well she looked: the enormous ganglions which I had noticed in my previous examination had all but disappeared.

"I examined the patient for the last time on December 26 (1927) and gave her the medical certificates required under the circumstances. I declared therein that Miss Delgado y Riestra was in perfect health and that she did not even show any traces of lesion.

"I forgot to say that the patient, seeing my astonishment at finding her so well, declared that she had commended herself to Father Pro, and that to him and him alone was she indebted for the state in which I saw her.

"I am ready to assert before the ecclesiastical authority and under oath what I have just written."

Dr. L. G. Vasquez.

—Mexico D. F., January 4, 1928.

ing ourselves to Father Pro. After the triduum there was no trace of the ailment."

Plain people sent plain reports thanking Father Pro.

"C. A. was suffering from a very bad cough and from an ague; headaches and pains in the stomach. We, his parents, R. A. y J. S., invoked Father Pro and she (our child) recovered from this terrible illness. She had put it (the relic, no doubt) on her chest, wrapped in a little handkerchief, for fifteen days, and the illness disappeared. Thanks to Our Lord and to the very reverend Father Pro."

Another poor woman wrote from Mexico City that she obtained two favors after making a pilgrimage to Father Pro's tomb. "I have two sons. One would not work for fifteen years and gave me much annoyance. The other was in prison and it was almost impossible to liberate him. I went to Father Pro's tomb and prayed for

my two sons. I made a novena promising to publish the favor.

"Now, the boy who would not work has been a commercial traveller for five months; he came to that decision without a word on my part. The one who was in jail returned the other day saying that he did not know the protector who spoke for him, but that he was released without having to report again at prison. How thankful I am to Our Lord and to the great saint Father Pro, since I obtained these miracles through his intercession!"

Gracia Padilla, of Mexico City, widow of M. del C. informed her son of her daughter's cure in a letter dated February 3, 1928. Her daughter's eyesight was seriously affected. A Mexico City specialist urgently ordered several punctures in the white of the eye. The mother put her trust in Father Pro.

"He is one of our latest martyrs," she explained to her son, "I have already related his burial."

Came the dread visit to the doctor's.

"We entered the dark room. The doctor examined my daughter, making her turn her eyes up, down, right, left. Then turning to me, he said:

"Madam, the eye is in perfect condition; there is absolutely no need of punctures!"

"My emotion was too great for words," added the mother. "The very sign I had asked Father Pro to give was that my daughter should no longer require punctures.

"Miracle! miracle! my dear child.... Besides, it is not the first time Father Pro cures people....

"How grateful I am to little Father Pro!"

It must not be thought, however, that Father Pro reserves his favors for his Mexican compatriots. He is beginning to scatter tokens of benevolence over the western countries where Providence trained him for apostolic work.

First of all the conversion of an old man through Father Pro' intercession evid-

ences that the ardent apostle is mindful in heaven of his priestly function.

A Jesuit Father was temporarily serving a little parish church near Paray-le-Monial, in France. On Sexagesima Sunday (1928) he returned crestfallen, telling how an old man on his deathbed had not even let a priest in to salute him. On hearing this, a young Mexican Jesuit, a former schoolmate of Father Pro, remembered the martyr's power with God. He said to the priest who had imparted his distress:

"Why don't you pray to Father Pro?"

They began a novena. On the following Sunday the invalid was found unconscious. He could hardly be made to understand that a priest was at his side ready to hear his confession:

"Another time," replied the dying man.

On Ash Wednesday, the priest brought a relic of Father Pro. The invalid who had fully regained consciousness, made a fervent confession and publicly received Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction.

From Spain comes the news of a marvellous cure obtained through Father Pro. The narrative of the humble servant who was the happy recipient is set forth in all its freshness.

Literal translation of the narrative of the cure attributed to Father Pro (Spain).

"I, the undersigned, Conceptión Vaqué y Sastre, aged sixty-one, born at Mora de Ebro (Tarragona), had long experienced a sharp pain in my left hand, so much so that, although obliged to work for a living, it was absolutely impossible for me to do so. I was a servant at the *Hospital del Espíritu Santo*. Two nuns of la Conception who tended the sick accompanied me to the Barcelona clinic hospital to have my hand examined by the doctors of the Faculty. Dr. Juan Solá Suris, surgeon in the Operating Clinic, radiographed my hand three times. The only remedy was an operation. It could not be performed because all the beds in the

clinic were occupied....Monday, May 7, was set for the operation. The middle finger and a part of the metacarpus were to be amputated. Now, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Mother Superior, a nun who came to visit her heard that I was ill. Seeing how depressed I was, she showed me a picture of Father Pro, of the Society of Jesus, shot during the Mexican persecution and said to me: "Conceptiôn, take courage; have confidence in this martyr; commend yourself to him and I assure you that to-morrow there will be no more question of an operation, for he will cure you." While speaking she applied the picture of Father Pro to the sore part, replacing the bandage over it. A few minutes after, I felt as if my hand was burnt with fire, so much so that I could hardly bear the pain. Then it seemed as if the finger bent by disease returned to its normal position. I certify that during the night I felt no pain.

On seeing me the doctor was dumfounded. He said to those who were with him: "I think that the operation is no longer necessary. That woman will die of a disease other than that from which she was suffering. No need of an operation." Impossible to express my joy. Since then I have been working. I am stronger than before my disease. My hand can carry very heavy weights. I am thoroughly cured at last. Thanks to the martyr, I can earn my bread by my labor."

Signed: CONCEPTIÓN VAQUÉ [1].

The last favor, granted in Rome, seems to show that Father Pro aspires to a world-wide reputation.

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1. The nun's deposition: "I myself applied the picture of Father Pro to the patient's hand, experiencing at the same time a deep emotion. I certify that the patient is cured and that her statement is true."

SISTER JACOBA GHIMERÁ.

—Barcelona, November 22, 1928.

Don Juan Solá Suris, surgeon at the Operating Clinic, certifies that Mrs. Conceptión Vaqué was treated in April of this year for *ostitis of the metacarpus* in the left hand and that she is now cured of this disease.

In testimony whereof I have signed this letter at Barcelona, on November 16, 1928.

JUAN SOLÁ SURIS.

Ada Sassi, who had long been ailing, fell, on May 25, 1927, into a state of extreme weakness and exhaustion. Doctors, repeatedly consulted, could afford her little relief.

Entering the Quisisana Clinique on November 8, 1928, she soon felt that she was growing worse. But trusting in Father Pro's intercession, she besought him to obtain her cure. On November 21, 22 and 23 she received Holy Communion for that intention. On November 24, the day after the anniversary of Father Pro's death, Ada Sassi felt quite restored. Her strength and appetite returned. Her prayer was heard [1].

A letter of June 23, 1928, informs us that devotion to Father Pro is rapidly spreading

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1. Copy of Dr. Tranquilli's testimony: I, the undersigned, surgeon, certify that Miss Ada Sassi had been suffering, for about five years, from nervous-organic exhaustion, and that but little improvement resulted from the reconstituting and opotherapic treatment. Marked and steadily increasing weakness had reduced her, in November 1928, to a deplorable condition when she entered the Quisisana Clinique. I, the undersigned, saw *de visu* that from night till morning of November 24, Miss Ada Sassi passed without transition from extreme asthenia to perfect health. In testimony whereof I have signed:

"Prof. Ercole Tranquilli."

—Rome, January 15, 1929.

in Mexico. Every day the faithful can be seen ascending Dolores Hill and kneeling on the spot where the remains of the martyr repose. At times the throng of visitors swells to the proportions of a pilgrimage.

God apparently blesses the Mexican people's confidence in the power of Father Pro, since He grants so many favors and graces to those invoking the name of His Servant.

The day is perhaps not far off when heroic Mexico may pray officially to her heroic son.

The Holy Father, who longs to comfort his children in the most terrible persecution, seems desirous that Mexican martyrs be speedily enrolled in the catalogue of the Blessed.

Some time ago he was presented with a photograph showing a group of Mexicans killed by Calles' bands. The Pope considered them with emotion and then wrote below the photo the words of the Mass for

Martyrs, which under the Pontiff's pen assume an unmistakable significance:

Et palmae in manibus eorum....Gloria Christi....Sanguis martyrum semen....Laudem eorum nuntiet Ecclesia.

The Church will proclaim their glory!

—Rome, December 19, 1928.

Persons who have obtained favors through Father Pro's intercession will help to promote the martyr's cause by sending an account of such favors to the author: Rome 113, Borgo S. Spirito 5, or to Rev. Henry Valley, Ysleta College, R. F. D. 1. Box 275, El Paso, Texas, U. S. A.

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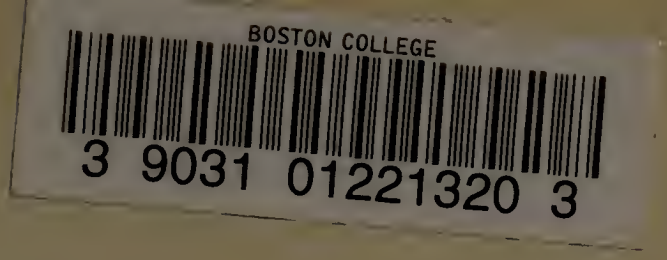

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